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LETTERS

TO THE

REV. EZRA STILES ELY, A. M.

AUTHOR OF

A CONTRAST

BETWEEN

CALVINISM AND HOPKINSIANISM.

BY JAMES WILSON, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN PROVIDENCE.

"He that is first in his own cause seemeth just: But his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."

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"Letters to the Rev. Ezra Stiles Ely, A M. Author of a Contrast between Calvinism and Hopkinsianism. *By James Wilson, A M* Pastor of the second congregational church in Providence" "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just: but his neighbour cometh and searcheth him."

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WILLIAM S. SHAW,
Clerk of the District of Massachusetts.

LETTERS

TO THE

REV. EZRA STILES ELY, A. M.

LETTER I.

SIR,

YOUR "*Contrast* between *Calvinism* and *Hopkinsianism*" having been politely presented to me, by you, through my valued friend Mr. H—. of this town, gratitude and the usual forms of civility require from me a suitable acknowledgment. How far the following letters, thus publickly addressed to you, are a becoming acknowledgment, remains for you and for the publick to decide. That your book is well intended, industriously compiled, curiously arranged, and contains a variety of judicious and interesting observations and criticisms, I can feel no hesitancy in openly acknowledging. But should I withhold further encomiums, it will, no doubt, be amply gratifying to you, to reflect, that your "*Contrast*," eulogized by names *numerous*, *dignified* and *venerable*, needs no support from my feeble pen and obscure name.

Upon first looking into your book, I was not a little surprized, to discover such a number of "*Isms*," industriously collected, and singularly arranged; for happening to open towards the latter part of it, I be-

held exhibited in as regular columns, as regiments drawn up for a review, no fewer than eight of them. Upon the right flank stood *Calvinism* duly uniformed, and on the left *Deism* in full dress, proceeding from right to left along the line. I perceived in formidable array stood Hopkinsianism, Universalism, Arminianism, Arianism, Sabellianism and Socinianism. Turning next to the forepart of your book, four other columns appeared. At the head of the first stood the venerable Calvin himself. The second was formed by his allies or disciples; such as Witsius, Beza, &c. and supported by multiplied references to numerous creeds, confessions and catechisms. The third was headed by Hopkins, seated in "divinity chair," as leader of a sect. And in the last column, as his genuine disciples, appeared Emmons, Spring, Weeks, &c.

Without designing to derogate in any wise from the true merit or deserved reputation of any of the forementioned celebrated reformers and divines, or from the credit of their respective systems, I could not on reviewing this "assemblage" of names, creeds and sectarian "*Isms*," but regret the imbecile propensity in human nature, so servilely to bow down to the dictation of dogmatical sect leaders; subjecting themselves thereby to oppressive yokes, and to the egregious folly of turning from the pure streams of scriptural instruction, to the sinks of human errours and corruptions. Nor could I refrain from contrasting with *submission* so *abject*, the more noble conduct of the Bereans, who judiciously made the *scriptures* alone, the *test* of truth and errour.

Instead then of making Calvinism or Anticalvinism, in whatever shape or under whatever name they may appear, the test of what we are to believe or to reject, would it not, Sir, be more wise to adopt the Holy Scriptures, as the only infallible criterion of faith and practice? And instead of enlisting under the banner of John Calvin, Samuel Hopkins, James Arminius, or of any other sectarian chieftain of ancient or of modern times, to become *only* the followers of that teacher, whose disciples were first called christians at Antioch?

By classing Hopkinsianism, Arminianism, and other "Isms," in the ranks of Heresy, you have thrown the Gauntlet and invited to a combat on controversial ground. By adducing Calvinism as the true test of christian doctrines, you have given your opponents a decided advantage over you; as they must all consider the Holy Scriptures to be the only true test—and your substitution of Calvinism therefor, as an unequivocal and very unhappy departure from orthodox christianity. Controversial discussions on religious subjects are by many devout persons deplored and deprecated. That you judge very differently, is manifest from your Contrast. And so far as respects simply the question of the expediency of controversy on religious subjects, you undoubtedly have better authorities on your side, than can possibly be adduced against you.

Christ himself was a triumphant controversialist, when with resistless argument he assailed the strong holds of errour to the conviction or confusion of disputatious Scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees. His divinely

inspired apostles, having "A mouth and wisdom given them, which their adversaries were unable to gainsay or resist," nobly maintained the truths of the gospel against the errours of the world. And when the gross errours of Papal superstition and domination had through *ages* blinded, corrupted and oppressed the christian church through a great portion of the world, the instruments of *reformation* were principally the efforts of Wickliff, Luther, Calvin, Zuingle, and of other controversial champions. Truth is never obscured, but brightens beneath the test of strict investigation. It is *errour only*, that shrinks from, and suffers by scrutinizing research. Well timed and well conducted controversy, hath on its side the enhancing interests of *truth*, the *example* of illustrious *reformers*, the approving and prospering sanctions of Divine Providence, the faithful and successful efforts of Apostles, the illuminating and exciting influence of the Holy Spirit, and the hallowed example of that Teacher, who in due time shall ascend the judgment throne, and thence award to *true* and to *false* teachers, and to every man, according as his works shall be. It is not therefore controversy *itself* that should be deplored or deprecated, but its *abuse*. It is the interference of party zeal, of an uncandid disposition, and of malignant passions that should be denounced. Controversy, guided by knowledge, accompanied by candour, governed by truth, and sweetened by love and good will, becomes innocent as the Lamb—gentle as the Dove, industrious as the Ant, penetrating as the eye of the Eagle, and luminous as the meridian sun.

Such, sir, should be the controversy deemed admissible, amongst men professing the religion of that divine master, who declared that those who were not against him were for him, who never tolerated persecution, nor gave countenance to railing accusations, and who never authorized his disciples to class all those who might in some respects not "follow them," as holding rank only, with hereticks.

On some particulars of Calvinism and of Hopkinsianism, I will animadvert in my next.

LETTER II.

SIR,

WHEN the elevation and weight of character, the talents, and fervent piety of ministers denominated Calvinists are duly appreciated: When the memories of the pious dead of this denomination are with veneration recollected, and its living luminaries duly respected and esteemed; it is not without some unpleasant feelings of regret, that a publick avowal of dissent can be made, from some opinions tenaciously maintained by a denomination deserving of honour and esteem. But where duty appears imperiously to command, obedience must implicitly be yielded.

As preparatory to discussions involving Hopkinsian and Calvinistick principles, I have here to observe; 1st. That when hereafter Calvinism shall be named or implied, no other doctrines will thereby be intended, but only such as are comprized within the appellation, The five points of Calvinism.

2d. That by Hopkinsianism only will be meant the peculiarities of that system, whereby it stands distinguished from Calvinism, and from the tenets of other religious denominations.

And lastly, that as quotations will frequently be made from your Contrast, I shall, to save time, omit page, chapter and section: but when from other books, due reference will be made to page and author.

HOPKINSIANISM.

"GOD was the *author*, *origin* and *positive cause* of "*Adams' sin.*" (Hopkins.) "By *immediately acting* "on the *heart* with *energy*, to produce the volition, "*God produces every sinful act;* and in this manner, "from the beginning to the end of life does God rep- "robate every sinner who is lost." (Emmons.)

Unable to express my unqualified dissent from this tenet, in better terms than is done by two of your venerable friends, permit me, Sir, to adopt theirs.

"To say that the Spirit from the Lord, which in- "fluenced Saul and others, was the Holy Ghost, is "blasphemy." (Calvin.)

"To *make God the author of sin*, is such *dreadful* "*blasphemy*, that the thought, cannot without hor- "rour, be entertained by any christian." (Witsius.)

But this tenet, to be seen in all its unrighteous deformities, requires that we follow it up in its legitimate consequences. For in strict agreement with this doctrine, we must contemplate the Infinitely Blessed God, as Almighty Creator, erasing his own image from the heart and mind of Adam and Eve, and in its place inscribing on both the image of Satan, in pro-

pensions to every vile deed. We must view Deity as the Sovereign Lawgiver, causing rebellion against his own authority, by *irresistibly* exciting the whole race of mankind, to detest his own laws, character, and government. We must regard Him as the Father sending his dearly beloved, and only begotten *Son*, to atone by a death inconceivably dreadful, for these crimes, thus wholly caused by the Father himself. And lastly, We must behold the Son raised from the dead, and invested with the character of the Sovereign Judge, to sentence to eternal perdition, innumerable millions of these *necessitated* rebels, for refusing to repent, although by his Almighty Father irresistibly excited to this very impenitence. Gladly, Sir, would I pause here, and proceed no further; but duty, imperious duty impels me forward. Bear with me, and be not offended, when I observe, that whilst Hopkinsians, admit in the fullest extent, the forementioned consequences of their doctrines, they consider the very same consequences as equally inferable from Calvinism, as exhibited in your *Contrast*. You cannot surely be offended, should I here present from your own book, a few quotations, which contain the ground of these infered consequences.

CALVINISM.

"There is an *eternal divine determination*, which "respects all beings, actions and events." "Predes-"tination, we call the eternal decree of God, whereby "he had it *determined by himself*, what he willed to "become of every man. For all are not created to

"like estate, but to some eternal life, and to some "eternal damnation was fore appointed." "The de- "crees were not formed in consequence of any fore- "sight of sin, or holiness in the reprobate, or the "elect."

"All the confessions of the reformed churches agree, "that the *decrees* are *executed* by *creation* and *provi-* "*dence*, and that *means* as well as *ends* are predestin- "ated." "God not only foresaw the fall of the first "man, and in him the ruin of his posterity, but also "*disposed* it after his own will." "The fall of man "proceeded from the wonderous counsel of God." "When we affirm that God fore ordained that man "should sin freely, he could not but sin freely, unless "we would have the event not to answer to the pre- "ordination of God." "From all this may be *infer-* "*ed* by a plain *consequence* that man could not but "fall."

From the preceding positions and "*infered* conse- quence" all *genuinely* calvinistic, it seems impossi- ble wholly to avoid the Hopkinsian construction of their meaning, as signifying the *causation* of sin to originate in God only; nor will the following evasive apology remove the difficulty. "God's *ordaining*, "*ordering* and disposing of the fall, does not, howev- "er, imply that he was the *creator* of a sinful *volition*, "or the *efficient agent* of sin, for Adam had the pow- "er to choose evil." (Calvin.) A power necessarily to choose evil, but no power to refuse it, implied no freedom of volition in Adam. The government of his will was not in himself, but in another Being, who, as

the *efficient* or *first cause*, governed Adam, as the *agent* or *secondary cause* of sin: so that Hopkinsianism to all intents and purposes results herefrom.

To this it is replied, "It is somewhat against the "doctrine that God *creates* sin, that the scriptures "give us no account of God's creating any being orig- "inally unholy. If sin was ever the effect of his "*immediate causation*, why do we not read of his "creating a devil outright? God made angels, but "angels made themselves devils." "The Calvin- "ists maintain that God can govern his creatures "without doing all their deeds himself. (Ely.) Here it should be observed, that as sin is neither a substance of any kind, nor a mode of any substance, it therefore is incapable of being created; and that as it consists in the transgression of divine law, so whosoever causes such transgression, is the true and real author of the sin committed, whether he "does the deed himself," or only "governs the agent" who does it. And of this you seem well apprized, for you deny only what you term "*immediate causation*" of sin by Deity, that is, God's acting the sin himself. God does not create a devil outright, (you say) but he makes angels, and then governs them into self-made devils, "with- "out doing all their deeds himself." As nothing, therefore, can be plainer than that the Hopkinsian inference from Calvinism of the divine causation of sin, is most strictly correct, I shall pass on to the consideration of another subject.

"The Calvinists conceive that a man is so blind in "his understanding, so corrupted in his affections,

"and so completely dead to all good, that God need "not exert a *positive* influence to create more sin in "him, in order to his reprobation. They would rath- "er say, that if God does not bestow his grace, the "sinner is already under the sentence of condemna- "tion. If God does not sanctify him completely, cor- "ruption will rage, and reign even to eternal damna- "tion. When God's gracious will prevents our will "from having its course, then we are saved. But "when God says concerning any one *he is joined to* "*his idols, let him alone; I am weary with repent-* "*ing, My spirit shall no longer strive with him:* "then the sinner is carried along by the current of his "own propensities, to the bottomless abyss. Cast a "lifeless body into the water above the cateract of Ni- "agara, you need not apply your hand to propel it "down the precipice. A living person would require "your aid to make effectual resistance, and escape the "ruin; but the natural course of the flood will bear "the *dead* to the gulf, and grind them on the rocky "bed to atoms." (Ely.)

You here, sir, exhibit some traits truly characteristic of your system. You affect to assign substantial reasons for the reprobation of those whom you believe to have been consigned to eternal perdition, not in consequence of any foresight of sin in them, but because Deity willed it should be so. This *fundamental* principle, that men are damned, not because they deserve it, but because independently of all deservings, it was eternally so willed by the Deity, you attempt to gloss over and obscure, by representing as

the causes of their destruction, that they have *corrupted affections*, are *cleaved* to their *idols*, have tired the *patience* of their God, *rejected* the *offers* of *grace*, and *resisted* the divine Spirit, which will no longer *strive* with them.

If these things are the real causes of damnation to the reprobates, and did you really believe them to be so, then the reprobating decree from all eternity would be to them a nullity, and in your mind be utterly subverted, for both cannot stand together. And if reprobates are actually the authors of their own corruption and crimes, most just would be their punishment; and still much more deservedly would they be objects of divine wrath, if mercy were truly extended to them, in real offers of a possible salvation.

But well you know, sir, that although your system may admit of these things, as baits upon the hook, and as decoys to the snare, yet that they have no consistent connexion with the system itself; for all that it means by the *strivings* of the Spirit is *only* "That "general calling common to the wicked; by the out-"ward preaching of the word." (Calvin.) That the wilful rejection of the offers of grace consists in the "*crime* of the *want* of *natural power*, to climb up "into the pure and clear knowledge of God, by the "reading of the scriptures." (Calvin.) That if "cleaved to his idols," it is only with the affections of a "stone," preponderating to its centre; or as a "lifeless body afloat on the waters of Niagara, borne "along by the natural course of the floods." (Ely.) And to complete the system, the *corruption* and *mis-*

conduct of the miscreant reprobates, are not the causes, but only the *means* of their perdition; for "all the "confessions of the reformed churches agree, that "*means* as well as *ends* are predestinated." (Ely.)

Such, sir, is the candour, the consistency, and the undissembling truth of that system, which you erect as the *test* whereby to try the right and the wrong in other religious systems. No system indeed is without its difficulties. But when the difficulties in any system, exhaust every fair effort of ingenuity, when they require artifice, shuffling and evasion, to transform contradiction into consistency; and when after all, they still multiply, so that injustice and cruelty visibly mark their character, then surely such system should forever be abandoned; unless the last refuge of desponding errour should be deemed an apology sufficient, viz. To denominate each contradictory tenet an holy mystery, hidden from the ungenerate by his own "*crime* of the want of natural power, to climb "up into the pure and clear knowledge of them by the "reading of the scriptures." And surely no creed, denominated christian, can exhibit any tenet less consistent with truth and goodness, than that very *pivot* on which yours turns, viz. that Deity makes men wicked by an *indirect* influence, in order, for his own glory, to consign them over to eternal misery. And which implies therein "such an act of flagrant injustice, as "we could scarcely attribute to the worst of men. "He who leads another into an offence, that he may "have a fairer pretence to punish him for it, or brings "him into such circumstances, that he cannot avoid

"committing a capital offence, and then hangs him for "it, is surely the most execrable of mortals.* What "then should we make of the God of justice and mer- "cy, should we attribute to him a decree, the date of "which is lost in eternity, by which he determined to "*cut* off from the *possibility* of salvation, *millions* of "*millions* of unborn souls, and leave them under the "*necessity* of sinning, by hardening their hearts against "the influences of his own grace and spirit. What- "ever may be pretended of such opinions, it must be "evident to all who are not deeply prejudiced, that "neither the *justice* nor the *sovereignty* of God can "be magnified by them." (Clarke.)

Your Critique will be noticed in my next.

LETTER III.

SIR,

YOUR "Critique" on a "discourse in favour of an *indefinite atonement*" deserves attention. Your animadversions on the *ideas* of atonement, against which you contend, bear more especially on two

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* Just such an "execrable mortal" acting on the principle of *first corrupting*, and then *destroying*, was the barbarously brutal executioner, who, having seized on the maiden daughter of Sejanus, (prime minister to Tiberius) to put her to death for her father's crimes; and recollecting that according to the Roman laws, no virgin could be put to death; in order to render her a legal subject of punishment, first violated her chastity, and then led her to execution.

points; first, in respect to extent, and secondly, as to the precise nature. The *heretical* sermon extends the atonement to all mankind. Your orthodoxy limits it to a part of mankind. The sermon boldly denies that Christ "suffered the pains of hell" for any sinner. This you will not admit, though in doubt of Christ's having "suffered for sin, in his holy soul, after death." But you exhibit the "Great Reformer," as maintaining it. As I am unable to comprehend the precise nature of "Christ's descending into hell, fighting hand "in hand with the power of the devil, and, *as it were*, "wrestling hand in hand with the armies of hell." I therefore must leave these subjects to Calvin, and others who are able to comprehend such mysteries. But as the scriptures are much more explicit as to the extent of the benefit of the Redeemers death, than they are as to his invisible sufferings, I therefore shall endeavour to vindicate the evangelical benefits of his death as extending to *all mankind*, against your unscriptural *limitations* of it to a *part* only. But to prevent all mistake as to terms used, I have here to observe, that by "the evangelical benefits of Christ's death extending to all mankind," I do not mean *actual, eternal salvation* to *all men*, but, that through this medium, a real opportunity is afforded to every man to obtain this salvation, and which nothing can possibly prevent, but his own misconduct. The way being thus opened, I now proceed.

Upon the *text*, selected as a *theme* on atonement, you commence your critique; nor is your onset unsuccessful; as it must be conceded that 1 Timothy, iv, 10,

means not *salvation* through *atonement*, but preservation in this life under the ruling hand of divine providence. But you are not equally happy in your *use* of victory. In order to a second triumph, you concede, for arguments sake, that, in the above text, Christ and not the Father is "called the saviour of all men, &c." and triumphantly observe, it "will not" thence "follow, "that he actually made *satisfaction for the sins* of all "men;" because, "if Jesus has procured a *space* for "*repentance*, and the temporay forbearance of God, "for the *non-elect*, it does not of course follow, that "he made an atonement, to satisfy divine justice, and "merit acceptance for every rebel." In these concessions you have entangled yourself in difficulties, perhaps greater than you were apprized of. For as by "*non-elect*" you mean *reprobates* consigned unconditionally, *without help* or *hope* to sinfulness and impenitence in time, and to endless torments in eternity, pray what consistency is there in granting unto such "a space for repentance!" Or how could such *space* be procured by Christ's death, when thereby he made no "atonement to satisfy divine justice for such rebels?" This *bait on the hook* you vindicate, by observing, that "if God may consistently command "men *not elected* to repent, he may men for whose "sins no price of redemption has been paid; and if "he is *not willing* that the *reprobate* should perish, "he has the same disposition, and is *not willing* in the "*same sense*, that the *unredeemed* shall perish." (Ely.) Desirous, sir, that your arguments shall be tried only by truth and candour, permit me to ask, what you

mean by the "*men not elected?*" Do you not by them mean the *persons reprobated* to *sin* and *perdition from* and *to* all eternity? And are not *these* the very men who are *unredeemed?* You cannot reply otherwise than in the affirmative. The *men not elected* are the *reprobates*, and these are the *unredeemed*, in your ideas of them: To all which I reply, if any such persons have any *real* existence, all that can be said concerning God's unwillingness that they should perish, and concerning any propriety to command them to repent and believe the gospel, is far worse than high sounding nonsense; it is a covering so thin, that even a small portion of discernment will perceive contradiction and deception to lurk beneath.

Elated with fancied triumphs, you learnedly comment on Heb. 11. 9, 10. "We see Jesus who was "made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering "of death, that by the grace of God he should taste "death for *every man.* For it became him in bring-"ing many *sons* unto glory, to make the Captain of "their salvation perfect through sufferings." On this you observe, that "the original contains nothing an-"swerable to *man;* and the eliptical expression should "*undoubtedly* be supplied by *son.* Christ was made "for a *little while*, lower than the angels, that he might "*die for every son*, about to be brought into glory."

Permit me, sir, to confront your criticism, which substitutes "every son" for "every man," with the high authority of Macknight on the same point, who, both in his literal translation and in his commentary, renders it "every *one;*" which, though different in

phrase from the common translation, is equally extensive in meaning; for the terms "every one," are more unlimitedly universal than the expression "every man." It is true, however, that in his 3d note he adds, "As "this discourse is concerning God's bringing many "sons into glory through the death of Christ, the "phrase may be supplied on account of *every son*;" but immediately he adds, "It is true however, that "Christ died on account of *every one*, in the largest "sense of the expression." And he further admits, that "the *apostle* hath declared in this passage, "that "Jesus was made for a little while less than angels, "that he might be capable of dying for the *salvation* "*of mankind.*" Instead then, sir, of concluding with you, that Christ "undoubtedly" died *only* for every *son*, permit me, with the apostle Paul and Macknight, to believe that he died for the *salvation* of *mankind*, or for *every one* of the whole race of man. And on this construction *only*, can the gospel consistently be preached to every creature, tendering sonship and glory unto all, who receiving it, become thereby obedient unto the faith.

To notice minutely each minor remark, or half digested argument throughout your "Critique," might prove as disagreeable to you, as it would be tedious to me. Gratifying therefore it is to discover you already in advance to undermine and assault a point preeminently important. Your approach you announce by declaring that "the holy scriptures contain nothing "more favourable to the doctrine of a general atone-"ment, than the declaration that Christ is a propitiation

"for our sins; and *not for ours only*, but also for the "sins of the whole world." (1 John, II. 2.) Although greatly reluctant to make long quotations, yet your commentary, and observations on this text, render it necessary; nor is this at all surprising, for you constrain even St. John himself, thus to speak what he never intended: "My little children, sin not; but if "any man should be tempted and sin, let him remember to prevent him from sinking in despair; that "we have an advocate with the Father, who is the "propitiation for the sins of *every one who now be-*"*lieves*, yea, even for the sins of the whole world, "*which shall at any future time believe* on his name." And then you observe, that "world is often restricted "in this manner, and Christ has a *spiritual* world, in "opposition to that which lieth in wickedness." Delighted and instructed by your inventive ingenuity, permit its transfer to Romans VIII, 22, 23. "For "we know that the *whole creation* groaneth and tra-"vaileth in pain together until now: And not only "they, but *ourselves* also, who have the first fruits of "the spirit, even we ourselves, groan *within ourselves*, "waiting for the adoption, namely, the *redemption* of "the *body*." Taught by your commentitious exposition, we may now fancy St. Paul thus speaking; "For we believers who have the first fruits of the "spirit, do groan within ourselves, waiting for the re-"demption of the body, yea, and the *whole creation* "'*which shall at any future time*' have the first fruits "of the spirit; they shall also like us groan for the re-"demption of the body; but the *present whole crea-*

"*tion* being *wicked*, never groans for any deliverance; "and *whole creation* is often *restricted* in this man- "ner, because Christ has a spiritual whole creation, in "opposition to this which lieth in wickedness." Thus, sir, your manner of exposition is so very accommodating, that by it the scriptures may be made to mean *any* thing, *every* thing, or *nothing*, as may best suit the purpose of the expositor.

You next proceed, "If, however, as some suppose, "John addressed Jewish christians by the *whole world*, "he might have intended believers of all nations, or "of the gentiles; for the *inhabitants* of the *Roman* "*empire*, and the uncircumcised, generally, were de- "nominated the whole world, Luke II, IV. Upon "these principles may be explained (1 John, IV, 14, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent "the Son to be the *Saviour* of the world,") and all "similar passages which speak of God's *loving* the "world, and of Christ's being the *saviour* of the "world." All that is here said amounts to nothing in respect to argument, because it is built upon two idle suppositions; 1st, "If, as some suppose, John addressed Jewish believers," then 2dly, "by the *whole world* he *might* have intended believers of all nations, or of the gentiles." Answer 1st. If St. John did not address exclusively Jewish believers, and no one knows that he did, then, 2dly, He *might not*, by *whole world*, have meant gentile believers. That St. John wrote to believers is certain beyond all controversy, and as he contrasted *whole world* against *believers*, he could only have meant thereby *unbeliev-*

ers. To suppose otherwise makes but tautological nonsense of the apostle's doctrine; for it would amount to this, viz. "Christ was a propitiation for *believers'* sins, and not for *believers'* sins only, but for *all believers'* sins."

However inconclusive you are, sir, in respect to argument, yet you appear to excel most other men in facility of discovery: for you *seem* to have ascertained that *Roman Empire*, and *gentile christians*, are scripturally implied in the terms, *The whole world.* Had this important discovery been made only three centuries ago, what a new train of arguments might it have furnished, in vindication of the highest claims of the Papal Hierarchy, over the *christian whole world.* The discoverer must, as his due reward, undoubtedly have obtained a Cardinal's hat; whilst the reformers, Luther and Calvin, must have had to encounter a new host of difficulties.

It is not indeed, at all surprising, that you should exert all your ingenuity, and exhaust all your resources of argument, to restrict, if possible, the meaning of *world*, and *whole world* to believers only; because you *perceive* and *feel*, that if unbelievers in *opposition* to believers are thereby scripturally meant, your side of the question is irretrievably lost; a general or universal atonement is proved beyond all dispute, and your sense of a *particular Election*, shaken to its very foundation. The *ill* success attending the arguments you adduce, amount, at least, to a negative proof of fallacy upon your side of the question. Permit me now sir, to adduce some positive and conclusive proofs.

The term *world* hath various significations, which have no manner of connexion with the subject debated; such as the terraqueous globe; the globe and all its appendages, and inhabitants of every species: And that portion of mankind subject to Roman taxation at Christ's birth. The import of *world* and *whole world* as now debated, refers to mankind in two senses. It refers to *numbers* and *moral character.* This is exemplified in Romans III, 19: "What things soever "the law saith, it saith to them who are under the "law: that every mouth may be stopped, and *all the* "*world* may become *guilty* before God." Here *numerically*, it means the *whole*, *not a part* of mankind; and *morally*, it signifies *not a good*, but a *bad* state of men. It should, however, here be observed, that with respect to numbers, we differ much *less* than we do with respect to moral character; because we both admit, that the *whole* world, and *all* the world, sometimes comprehend all mankind, and at other times only a part of the human race. But with respect to *character* we greatly disagree. On one side it is contended, that *world* morally considered, is invariably contrasted with a state of submission to God, and is used consequently as implying only, alienation from, and opposition to God and his church. And on the other side you assert, "that world and whole world, "are often so restricted as to mean Christ's spiritual "world, in opposition to the world that lieth in wick-"edness;" but a single proof capable of enduring examination, you have no where adduced.

Proofs positive against your assertions, and stamped with evidence of divine authority, I shall now offer; and to accommodate your taste, I will present them in the form of Contrasts.

CONTRAST 1.

The world against Christ and his church: "If the "*world hate you*, ye know it *hated me* before it *hated* "*you:* If ye were of the *world*, the *world* would love "its *own*, but because ye are not of the world: but "I have chosen you *out* of the world, therefore the "world hateth you." (Christ.)

CONTRAST 2.

The world at enmity with God; "Know ye not "that the *Friendship* of the *world* is enmity with "God?" (James.) "We know that we are of God, "and the whole world lieth in wickedness." (John.) "Exposition, "Here the world signifies not the ma- "terial fabrick of the world, but the wicked men of "the world; wherefore the *whole world* denotes all "the idolators, infidels, and wicked men of the "world." (Macknight.)

CONTRAST 3.

The world averse to the Holy Spirit, and to the dispositions, consolations, and pursuits of real christians. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you "another comforter, that he may abide with you for- "ever. Even the Spirit of Truth, whom the *world* "cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither "knoweth him." (Christ.) Explanation, "The world "being blinded with sensuality, can neither discern

"the operations of the Spirit, nor partake of his joys." "(Macknight.) "Be not conformed to this *world*, "but be ye transformed in the renewing of your "mind." "The world is crucified unto me, and I "unto the world." (Paul.)

CONTRAST 4.

Christians.	*The whole world.*
"We know that we are of God."	"And the *whole world* lieth in wickedness."
	1 John, v. 19.
"He is a propitiation for our sins."	"And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."
	1 John, II. 2.

As you appear, sir, to be endued with an exquisite discernment of the essence of doctrines, when exhibited in the form of *Contrasts*, I shall not further press this subject of the *whole world* in *wickedness:* but proceed duly to notice your observations and reasoning, on 2 Peter, II. 1.

"Even denying the Lord that *bought* them:" on this you observe, that "The word rendered *bought*, "is never used as synonymous with *atonement* or "*propitiation;* but is derived from a word which sig- "nifies simply to *procure* to one's self. The persons "said to be *bought*, were procured as any thing is "*obtained*, either by exchange or *purchase* at a mark- "et place. Should you procure to yourself an ox at "the market, you might pay a price for him, but it "would *not be a price of redemption.* Should you "procure a fatling for your guests, you would not

"say, you had made an *atonement*, or reconciliation, "or a propitiation for it to the *man of the stall.* Nei- "ther may you say, that atonement was made for "these persons who were bought and denied their "master." You add, "The false teachers who "brought in damnable *heresies*, are said to have deni- "ed the Lord, who procured them to himself, or set "them apart as his teachers. In this sense, many, "who are bought of the Lord, being put into the "ministry of reconciliation, deny the Lord Jesus, "whom they should preach, and the true doctrines of "the atonement, which is the foundation of the gospel "system."

Whatever *mystical* meanings may attach to your very odd similes, of the "Ox bought in the market," and "the fatling procured from the *man* of the *stall*," whether one is designed as an emblem of a *heretical minister* "procured," as a fit subject to *roast* in the fire of the Inquisition; and the other of one "bought," as a victim to be offered up in fire eternal, under the absolute decree of unconditional reprobation, are particulars, with which, from their delicacy, I wish not to intermeddle.

You appear, sir, to think very diminutively of the original word rendered *bought* in the new testament. You assert it is never used as synonymous with atonement, &c. You define it to signifiy *to procure to one's self;* this may be done by a price, but not by a *price* of *redemption.* You admit it to be fit for market use, and as very appropriate to false teachers, who are *procured*, but *not redeemed*, &c. But in so

doing, you seem not to have been aware, that the original words, rendered by the translators *purchased*, *obtained* and *bought*, are frequently used by the inspired writers, as signifying *redemption*. For proof of this assertion, I here refer you to the following criticisms, from the pen of a learned friend, standing officially high in literary institutions.

"The Greek term, which in Acts xx, 28, is rendered *purchased*, is the same as that, which, though changed into another form, is rendered *purchased* possession, in Ephesians i, 14—rendered *peculiar*, in 1 Peter, ii, 9—to *obtain*, in 1 Thessalonians, v, 9—and to the *obtaining*, in 2 Thessalonians, ii, 14. These two last cases, I apprehend, suggest the original, literal signification of the term; and hence, as a substantive, it signifies an *acquisition* or a *purchase*. Instead therefore, of a *peculiar people*, as in Peter, a literal translator would say, a people for *acquisition* or *purchase;* and instead of *purchased possession*, as in Ephesians, such a translator would say, *the purchase* or *the acquisition*. This purchase, or acquisition, or people for acquisition, is undoubtedly the people of God, the *Church;* and this the text says, he has *purchased*, or *obtained*, or *acquired* with his own blood. This term is different from the term rendered *bought*, in 1 Corinthians, vi, 20, and viii, 23; and likewise in 2 Peter, ii, 1. This last literally signifies to *buy*, though in Revelation v, 9, and xiv, 3, 4, it is rendered *redeemed*. In these last cases, a literal translator would say *bought* or *purchased*, instead of *redeemed;* though in both

"cases the idea would probably be the same." Had you, sir, but duly attended to these several scriptures, which, though not literally expressing atonement, propitiation, or redemption, yet incontrovertibly were so used by inspired writers, you probably would not have debased your subject with such low and unbecoming language and comparisons, as those of the ox and the market, or the fatling, and the man of the stall; especially when attempting to explain a purchase made by the blood of the Son of God. And would you but candidly compare 1 Corinthians, v, 19, 20—viii, 23, with 2 Peter, ii, 1, you probably might obtain edifying instruction therefrom. Suffer me to insert them for your perusal. "Ye are not "your own; for ye are *bought* with a price; there- "fore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, "which are God's." "Ye are *bought* with a price." "Even denying *the Lord* that *bought* them."

It was, perhaps, the discovery of some difficulty from this quarter, that induced you to endeavour to open a way of retreat, by so explaining in the latter text, "*Lord*," as "To denote the Father, in distinction from *Jesus*, the *God-man*, Mediator." But were even this for argument sake admitted, you would gain nothing thereby; because in this case, the price paid by the Father, is the sacrifice, or offering up of his own Son, even Christ, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. Your retreat being thus cut off, should induce you carefully to examine into the true reason of your failure, in your denial of atonement for all mankind. If the cause which you advo-

cate is a good one, it will not be difficult to maintain it. If it is otherwise, you not only cannot defend it, but you justly will incur that censure, which you with no sparing hand deal out to others; for if Christ in dying, became a ransom or propitiation for all mankind; your pertinacious denial of it, is, according to your own meaning of the term *heresy*, of no small magnitude.

Original sin, will be noticed in my next.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

IN your note, page 80th, you thus remark on the difference of sentiment between the Calvinists and Hopkinsians, with respect to the "nature of the "*fall*, and its consequences." "The former say, Sin- "ners, you are infected with *original sin*, as well as "guilty of actual transgression. You are weak as "well as wicked; having neither the power, nor the "disposition to please God. Still you are bound to "obey God, because he commands obedience; and it "is your *crime*, as well as your *misery*, that you are "ruined, in body, soul and spirit. If God do not "make you *alive*, in all your powers, from the dead, "you must be damned." (Calvinism.)

"The latter say, Sinners you need not lament *orig-* "*inal sin:* repent of your *own* sins; for you are per- "fectly able to repent and keep the whole law. You

"see, then, how rebellious you are! So much you "have sinned, as you have deviated from perfect obe- "dience. Now if God do not make you *willing* to "do what you are able, you perish." (Hopkinsian- ism.)

To vindicate *truth*, thus tortured betwixt two *dominant* errours, shall be the effort of the present letter.

Original sin and its *off*-set depravity, whether *total* or *general*, are, in respect to the holy scriptures, terms of exotic kind: but indigenous to creeds, confessions and catechisms, where they flourish luxuriantly as in native clime and soil.

Whatever propriety may attach to these terms considered simply in themselves, yet, such is the manner in which they have been *hackneyed* in subserviency to mistaken and interested views of contending parties, that they are become calculated to mislead the understanding, and impose upon the judgment of inquirers after truth. For by appealing to long imbibed prejudices, rousing up dormant passions, and calling into action an accustomed train of associated ideas, the mind becomes but too often utterly disqualified for a candid, sedate, impartial and patient investigation of a *darling* idol, or *detested* heresy. Divesting ourselves, then, as far as possible from all prediliction for what Calvin, Arminius, or Hopkins may have taught on these subjects, let us only honestly endeavour to *seek truth* and detect *errour*, under whatever shape or name either may appear.

Original *sin* correctly defined and understood, as refering to mankind, implies only the transgression of

our first Parents when in the garden of Eden; and any other explanation of it is but absurdity and contradiction. It is, however, often so defined as to confound it with its supposed consequence, *depravity*. What the true signification of depravity is, and from what real source derived, will become distinct subjects of future consideration: but in this place we are to scrutinize the first sin of our first parents, and to endeavour to trace its real consequences. The account given us by inspiration of the condition of Adam and Eve before transgression, is plain and concise. They were formed in the likeness, and bore the image of their Creator. The resemblance was intellectual and moral. Man possesed of perception, reason, understanding and memory, together with the other appendages of mentality; bore resemblance to the Eternal and Uncreated mind which willed the universe into existence. And as the ever blessed Jehovah was *infinitely* holy, just, good, true and merciful; so Adam was both *finitely* and *mutably*, holy, just, good, true and merciful. He was innocent and righteous, but all his perfection excluded not *peccability*. Liable to temptation, he also was liable to fall thereby; and for aught we know, fell by the very first that assailed him.

Exalted ideas of Adam's primeval perfection, surpassing all credibility, have been imagined and asserted by multitudes. The love of the marvellous, has endued his body with immortality; his mind with a vigour inconceivably transcending that of any of his posterity; and his moral affections with a rectitude surpassing all his descendants in their highest attain-

ments of grace and holiness. Even an Emmons hath for firmness of integrity, placed Adam on a par with Christ, and so exalted his fidelity of holy love, that nothing short of almighty power itself, was able, in aid of Satan and Eve, to bow his reluctant will into rebellion; for "The first Adam was as totally dis-"posed to resist the devil in paradise, as the second "Adam was to resist him in the wilderness. They "were both perfectly holy; and being perfectly holy, "they both stood superiour to all external temptations. "It is in vain to attempt to account for the sin of the "first man, by the instrumentality of second causes. "And until we are willing to admit the interposition "of the *supreme first cause*, we must be content to "consider the fall of Adam, as an unfathomable mys-"tery." (Emmons.)

Immortality constituted no inherent quality of the bodies of our first parents, and was attainable to them only through access to the tree of life.* The circumstance of Adam's having given names to the different creatures, expressive of some characteristick quality in each, indicates either *intuitive* or *inspired* discernment; but whether intuitive or inspired, no man can certainly decide; neither can it be proved that the general qualities of creatures were ever so well

* Whatever *corporeal* energies or excellencies might originally have appertained to man; yet he was excelled in some respects, by many of the inferior creatures; by some in strength, by others in speed, and by myriads in loftiness of flight on rapid wings.

understood by him as by a Buffon, or of plants, as by a Linneus. Newton probably far excelled him in astronomical knowledge and calculation; whilst an Herschel discovered in the confused and faint glimmerings of the milky way, suns and systems unthought of by his first great ancestor. As to moral goodness, Adam's recorded works discover but small evidence of proficiency in righteousness. If affirmed of him that he was created in the image of God, a new creation in the same image is affirmed of all his believing descendants. If very good or perfect, perfection is as divinely affirmed of Job and Noah. Enoch, the seventh descendant from Adam, far excelled him in righteousness, stemming through centuries, with approved fidelity, the torrent of surrounding iniquity. Abraham, Joseph, Daniel and his tried companions, as well as multitudes in succeeding ages, when tested with the sharpest trials and sorest temptations, have often more nobly endured them than did their *frail* first parents. In the view of Adam and Eve was placed the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But its fruit was prohibited by divine injunction. Satan, in the serpent, ensnares Eve. She having eaten, solicits him to partake the forbidden repast. Yielding to insinuating persuasion, he adventures, and both are ruined.

Here, and here only was *original sin*. Its operation on Eve is obvious; exciting in her credulity towards the tempter; distrust of, and disobedience towards God, and a disposition to seek the seduction of Adam to share with her in imaginary bliss of forbidden wis-

dom. In Adam it operated fatal complaisance towards the temptress; and daring rebellion against his Creator. Of these transgressions, three individuals only were guilty. Satan, as the original instigator, subtle seducer, and vile corruptor of human innocency. For the *first* and *original cause* or *author* of sin, is inevitably ever the deepest partaker in the guilt. But as he only tempted, but could not compel the will, the government and exercise of which was in Adam and Eve themselves, therefore their yielding consent, though able to have withholden it, rendered them personally and justly responsible for self corruption. As Satan's guilt was not transferable to any other being, but was unalienably his own; so Eve's could not devolve by imputation upon Adam; and in like manner his sin, as to personal demerit, subjecting the offender to the righteous retribution of the judgment day, was incapable of involving any but himself. But although the second death, or the destruction of soul and body, is and will be inflicted *only*, for obstinate personal transgression, yet many and great temporal calamities are entailed by Adam upon all his posterity. The *consequences* of the apostacy of our first parents to themselves and to their descendants, we are now to trace. These consequences are of two kinds. *One* which is *averted* through redemption; and *another* which now impends over us and all our race.

The former is thus expressed:

Far from th' Almighty be it so to do,
To damn mankind for crimes they never knew;

Had mercy ne'er through Christ for us appeared,
We ne'er for Heav'n had hoped, nor Hell had feared.
As was the crime, the punishment had been,
In Adam sinned, in him cut off I we'en;
Nipt in the bud, had ne'er existence known,
Whilst justly had died our ancestors alone.

Upon this interesting subject, Macknight thus judiciously comments. "Sin entered through the disobedience of our first parents, whereby they become "liable to *immediate* death; and if God had executed "this threatening, the species would have ended in "them. But because in due time his Son was to "make atonement for the sin of men, God in the "prospect of that great act of obedience suffered Ad-"am and Eve to live and propagate their kind; and "granted them a new trial under a covenant, better "suited to their condition than the former; in order "that if they behaved properly during their probation, "he might raise them to a better life than that which "they had forfeited."

The unaverted and impending consequences involve all those inflicted evils upon Adam, Eve and their posterity, whereby the divine displeasure is signally displayed against the apostacy in Eden. Such as expulsion from that seat of felicity—Exclusion from the tree of life, and consequent mortality to them, and to all their descendants. The allotment of sorrow, toil and sweat to mankind, through means of a soil and clime accursed. And to womankind, the predicted anguish in her allotted hour of parturition.

That our first parents suffered personal *depravation* by their transgression, must be admitted without controversy. For it is the very nature of transgression to debase and demoralize. Adam evinced his fallen condition, by his sullen disingenuity in attempting to cast the odium of his offence on Eve and his Creator. Eve discovered her fallen character by a similar artifice. And both evinced debasement by stupid flight and guilty shame. But from this depravation and guilt, the promise of the woman's seed opened a gracious door of deliverance, on their personal faith and repentance. Unspeakably interesting is this view of the subject. It unfolds three distinct conditions of our first parents. The first, was that of innocency and capacity of righteousness by law. The second, was that of guilt and unavoidable condemnation and misery. And the third, was that of grace and salvation, by faith, through a Mediator. The first was a good condition. The second unspeakably evil; but the third was life from the dead, and a condition greatly to be prefered to the former: because, although "In this *new* covenant the obligation of the law written on the heart was continued," yet it was not on an undeviating obedience thereunto, that salvation depended; but on the obedience of faith, procuring remission of sins, through the Mediator of this new covenant. And here it is of great importance to observe, that Adam's posterity were all begotten and born, *not* under the first covenant, but under the far greater advantages and obligations of this *new* and *gracious* covenant. If born under the first covenant,

their condition would have been wholly different from what it now is. If born before the transgression, perfect undeviating conformity to law would have been indispensable in order to eternal life and happiness. The tree of knowledge of good and evil would have remained as a test of integrity to each individual. Ability of perfect obedience would have been conferred upon each. When the term of probation was fulfilled, those found faithful, having first been permitted to partake of the tree of life, would probably, like Enoch and Elijah, have been translated to the celestial paradise. But as each during the term of probation must also have been peccable, their state of trial would have been awfully perilous. A single transgression must have sealed the awful doom of the offender. The transgression and execution of law would probably have been on the same day. Like Annanias and Saphira, the rebel would have been exhibited an awful spectacle of divine wrath for the prevention in others of like offence.

If begotten and born after the fall, and before the *grace* and *promise* of a Saviour, how deplorable must have been the condition of Adam's posterity. Ejected from Eden, and expelled into a wilderness world. Actuated by strong animal propensions and passions. Subjected from feeble infancy to the caprice and cruelty of vicious parents, sunk low through sensuality into brutality, and rendered malignantly envious through hopeless desperation. Under the guardianship of such parents, and in such circumstances, there would have been much to apprehend and but little to hope. If in

addition to the law of conscience and reason, a revelation from heaven were vouchsafed to instruct these hapless babes, still how deplorable would have been their condition. If overtaken in deliberate transgression, no mediator to avert ruin. If in doubt and suspense as to duty, no gracious and pious parents kindly to instruct them. But on the contrary, under the control of monsters, disposed to cavil at the revelation from above, to misinterpret the divine law, and to asperse the divine character.

Happily for mankind, such is not the dispensation under which they are introduced into probationary existence. They are born heirs to the probationary promise of the *woman's seed*, under the new and gracious covenant. For if "by the offence of one, judg-"ment came upon all men to condemnation; even so "by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon "all men unto justification of life." And if "by one "man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so "by the disobedience of one, shall (the same) many "be made righteous." (Romans v, 18, 19.) Most certain then it is, that "where sin (through Adam) abounded, grace (through Christ) did much more abound." (Verse 20.)

As candidates for that salvation and glory, which are attainable through the obedience of faith, and not as convicts doomed to penal execution, the holy scriptures represent the whole race of Adam when entering on probationary existence. But Calvinism, overlooking or forgetful of the manifold evangelical declarations to this purpose, addresses itself to mankind as if

the major part were descended from Adam after his sad fall, and before divine grace had raised him and them into the regions of recovering mercy through a Mediator. For though a Saviour is come, these non-elect are not included in his mission. No price is paid for their ransom. No salvation is procured for them. As hopeless and as helpless they are left, as were the first guilty pair when clothed with fig-leaves. Blinded, hardened, and totally depraved from the womb, they are born, *only* that predestinated wrath may be wreaked upon them through endless duration. Hopkinsianism affecting to modify this abhorrent system, to mollify the condition of the perishing reprobates, and to vindicate the impeached character of divine consistency; declares of sinners, that "They "need no other principle, power or ability to do all "that God requires, than what they naturally possess." That "It is just as easy for a sinner to begin to love "God, as to continue to love him, after he has loved "him once. That "Since it is the duty of sinners "to make them a new heart, they have no excuse for "the neglect." That as "Sinners ought to make "them a new heart, then it must be their own fault if "they finally perish." That "They cannot be lost "if they only do their duty, and make them a new "heart. But if they finally neglect this duty, they "will justly expose themselves to eternal death." And yet "We have shown that God has given a cer-"tain number of mankind to Christ. That these, as "well as the rest of mankind are totally depraved; "that no means or motives will make them willing to

"be saved; and that God only can make them will-
"ing by an act of his power." "Common grace is
"granted to all, while special grace is granted only to
"the elect. God invites and commands others to em-
"brace the gospel, yet makes none willing to be sav-
"ed, but those whom he has given to Christ." Still
"God is to be justified in fore-ordaining the destruc-
"tion of the non-elect." (Emmons.) "Sinners, you
"are perfectly able to repent and keep the whole law.
"Now if God do not make you willing, to do what
"you are able, you perish." (Hopkinsianism.) Unable patiently to endure such discordant divinity, so contradictory to itself, and inconsistent with reason, I forbear further animadversion upon it, and proceed, as already proposed, to scrutinize *depravity*.

DEPRAVITY.

This term as commonly used, might for a substitute, admit of the word *degeneracy*. It implies a comparison betwixt two states or conditions, the *one* as *fallen off* from the *goodness* of the *other*. In this sense, *depravity*, may with propriety be used in reference to a variety of subjects. It applies correctly, when designed to contrast Adam's relation to immortality, through means of the tree of life, before his fall, with his, and his posterity's mortal condition after that event. It is equally correct when comparing our feeble constitutions with *antedeluvian* vigour, resisting the oppressive weight of *nine centuries* and *upwards*.

As there is thus depravity of bodily constitution, so there is likewise *degeneracy* of *condition*, as exempli-

fied in the contrast betwixt Adam's ease in Eden, and his posterity's sorrow, toil and sweat, in a world accursed for his sin: nor should we forget how fallen is womankind, from the better condition of Eve, had she but continued in innocency. Depravity may likewise properly, but in a *qualified* sense, be used in comparing Adam's moral character and condition, while in innocency, with the moral character and condition of his posterity, in reference to righteousness by law. He was possessed and capable of justification under the law of innocence: but after his transgression, neither he nor any of his descendants could obtain justification to life on the score of legal acquital: for "By the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified." Romans III, 20.

Had law been rigourously enforced, the whole race would, as before stated, have perished in their first federal head. It therefore was owing to the gracious interposition of the *second* Adam that they were reprieved, and the dispensation under which they were at first placed, changed for that of a far better; so that though still under the sentence of death, and incapable of legal justification; yet, being placed in a capacity of obtaining "justification by faith, without the deeds of the law," (verse 28) immortality and eternal life were thereby rendered attainable at the resurrection day. This subject St. Paul discussed particularly in several chapters of his epistle to the Romans. Because "it was a matter of great importance to prove, "that all mankind are punished with death for the sin "of the first man, because it shews that the punish-

"ment of our first parent's sin was not forgiven, but "only defered, that the human species might be con- "tinued. Accordingly, by God's sentence pronoun- "ced after the fall, Genesis III, 15—19, Adam and "Eve were allowed to live and beget children. And "as in the same sentence they were told that the seed "of the woman would bruise the serpent's head, it "was an intimation, that on account of what the seed "of the woman was to do, a new trial, under a *better* "covenant than the former was granted to them and "their posterity, that they might have an opportunity "of regaining that immortality which they had forfeit- "ed. These things the apostle supposes his readers "to know; for he proceeds to compare the evils "brought on mankind by Adam, with the advantages "procured for them by Christ, that all may under- "stand the gracious nature of the new covenant, un- "der which the human race is placed since the fall." (Macknight's illustration of Romans, chapter v.)

Depravity will also well apply, when the innocency and gentleness of childhood are contrasted with the pollutions, the avarice, the dissimulation and malig- nant degeneracy but too often discovered in multi- tudes, in more advanced years. The man who is past feeling, whose conscience is seared as with an hot iron, and who commits in secret the crimes he con- demns openly, being given over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, such man is more than depraved—*total depravity* truly designates his vile character.

Depravity likewise is detected when the piety of an Abraham, an Isaac, and a Jacob, is contrasted with the degeneracy of idolatrous descendants.

And we discover it also under the similitudes of the *silver* become *dross*, of *wine* mixed with *water*, the most *fine gold changed*, and the *faithful city* become an *harlot*. (Isaiah 1, 21, 22.) And yet this depravity has no reference whatsoever to Adam, either as contrasted with his rectitude, or as resulting from his transgression. When, therefore, all these varieties of degeneracy, and all corruptions whatsoever of human hearts and manners are under the appellation *depravity*, ascribed to Adam's apostacy as their true and only cause, then surely, the agency and gracious interposition of the Saviour to counteract the effects of the fall are grossly misunderstood; and the term depravity so perverted, as to render it the occasion of innumerable errours.

Calvinistick views of this subject will be considered in my next.

LETTER V.

SIR,

Depravity erroneous, or as taught in conformity with the *orthodoxy* of Calvinism, consists in the "crime of being *ruined* in *body*, *soul* and *spirit*." (Ely.) This *crime* and *ruin* were produced by "Ad-"am, who, in sinning, not only purchased *mischief*

"and *ruin* to himself, but also *threw down our nature* "*headlong* into like destruction;" so that "very in- "fants themselves bring their own *damnation* with "them *from* their *mothers' womb*, who, although "they have not brought forth the fruits of their ini- "quity, yet have the *seed* thereof *enclosed within* "*them.*" (Calvin.) For "sin becomes propagated "into the world by *natural generation*, grows with "the growth, and *strengthens* with the strength of "man." (Clarke.)

It would seem from the above assertions and *theory* of depravity, that *sin* originates from *seeds*, and is rather to be considered as a *real being*, than as the action of a being. It seems also to be rather an animal than a vegetable existence; for according to the above doctrine, it is not only propagated by natural generation, but in its growth, holds exact proportion of increase, to the augmenting size and strength of the human body. And as the bodies of infants are here affirmed to have these seeds, as sufficient causes of their damnation, inclosed within them from their mothers' womb, we may thence well conclude, that infants of largest size have in them the largest quantity of these seeds, and consequently are deserving of the greater damnation. And according to this criterion, we must suppose Sampson, Saul and Goliah to have been more wicked than either Cain, Pharaoh or Judas. This wonderful theory of *material iniquity*, unmasks a new world, brings into view a species of existences which Adam never saw, and unto which he never gave a *name*, (as he did to the cattle, to the

fowls, and to Eve whom he named woman when in Eden) and furnishes for contemplation, not to moralists alone, but likewise to philosophers, a *non-descript monster*, composed of neither *body*, *soul* nor *spirit*, but which riots to the "ruin" of them all. Had Moses but been well versed in this ingenious divinity, he would perhaps have speculated on the origin of the sinning angels; and have discerned some *seeds* of sin both in them, and in our first parents, even before they "brought forth the fruits of their iniquity."

And had the Apostle James but been inducted into these mysteries of Calvinism, he would not have taught that sin comes into existence, "When every man is tempted, enticed, and drawn away by his own lust." (1, 14). But zealous for its propagation by natural generation, he would perhaps have discovered it in Abraham's begetting Isaac, and in Zachariah's becoming the father of John the Baptist. And to confirm the whole theory, would perhaps have remarked on the quickened energies of *embrio* sin, when the depravity of nations troubled Rebecca. Genesis xxv, 22, 23. And still further, have established the favourite point, by the leaping of the *corrupt* babe in the womb of Elizabeth. But not to pursue too far, so preposterous a theory, we will now return to sedate argument. And for this you are not wholly unprepared. For by adopting Doctor Spring's definition of sin, as being a "personal quality," you thereby attempt to justify the Calvinistick construction of David's words, "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." And this text

so explained, you endeavour to sustain by numerous other selected texts, supposed by yourself most favorable to your own purpose. Nine of these selected texts and inclusive of that of David's confession, I shall endeavour to notice in due order. You have indeed specified a few others, and still more might be added to the same purpose; but those nine being generally most resorted to as the strongest holds of depravity, in the Calvinistick hereditary sense, should they prove insufficient to support your cause, it would be but in vain to adduce more; because the same train of reasonings which should detach the texts proposed, from being supporters of your cause, would in like manner detach all others of a similar signification. But as preparatory to this discussion, I would first briefly animadvert on your *adopted* definition of sin, as being a "personal quality." This definition, however accordant with your views, is utterly discordant with St. John's ideas on the same subject. His definition is, "*Sin is the transgression of the law.*" Surely *transgression of law*, is *not* a *quality*, but an *act* of a *person*. If sin is a quality, it is not a quality of a person, but a quality of an unrighteous action. This act violating divine law may be negative, or positive, and internal, or external. It may consist of an undue indulgence of some one affection, through *consent* of the *will*, in *desire*, *word*, or *action*. But the agent thus acting, must previously have been endowed with personal moral ability of controul over such affection. For guilt must ever hold exact proportion with ability to obey, and with abuse of such ability in disobedi-

ence. Every transgression thus committed, of a known divine law, *is sin* in its *strictest sense*, and according to the *true* and *proper signification* of that term. There are, however, other significations of the term which are scriptural. Christ is said to have been "made sin." (2 Corinthians, v, 21;) although neither sinful, nor a sinner. But when made a sin offering, he then was treated, as though he had been a sinner. Another example occurs in Romans v, 12, 14, in which this term is used in a *qualified* sense, "As by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: death reigned, from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." Here sin, when applied to Adam's offence, is used without any qualification of the meaning. It in this case implies real sin deserving of all the penalty of law. But when so used as to be ascribed to *all* upon whom death hath passed, and of course, so as to involve even infants and ideots, then its meaning becomes figurative, and implies only, that by subjection to death, they are treated as if sinners in reality. And which is done not to punish them as personal transgressors; but through them to express divine disapprobation of Adam's disobedience. And whilst the divine wisdom, thus subjects persons not actually guilty to sufferings and death, because of the sin of Adam, so it is done with a design of ample remuneration through Christ, who as the *antitype* of

Adam, as the *figure*, will at the resurrection impart to them a better life than that which they had lost.

Nor can this distinction betwixt sin *really* such, and sin only *figuratively called* such, be refuted, until such time, as that reason shall become absurdity, and absurdity become reason. And from the whole it conclusively follows, that sin, is *not* a personal quality, but a personal *act*, in violation of divine *law*; and is in no other sense a quality, but so far as it may appertain to forbidden action.

David's confession we are now first to consider. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalm LI, 5.) If this passage is to be understood literally, then so far as human agency was concerned in the iniquity of the affair, Jesse and his wife were the only efficients, but as they were honourably and lawfully united in marriage they transgressed no law; and entailed no disgrace on their posterity. And had they even been unmarried, although they would then unhappily have bastardized David and their other children, yet their sin would exclusively have been their own. This they could not have transferred to, or have entailed upon their posterity. For these, although *base born*, would still personally have been innocent. If this subject is to be considered *figuratively*, it will not avail to go back to Adam and Eve; because they were as lawfully and as honourably united in wedlock, as Deity Himself could thus have united them. So that no odium of this kind came upon their issue. But it was far otherwise with David in respect to his descent from

other ancestors. For in Deuteronomy xxiii, 2, 3, we read, that "a *bastard* or *moabite* should not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their *tenth* generation." And under even *both* of these most mortifying odiums was David born: For he was the *tenth* from *Phares* the *incestuous bastard* of Judah and Tamar, and the *third* from the *Moabitess Ruth*, by her husband Boaz. And so great was the *reproach* of *Judah's illicit commerce* with Tamar, that "Josephus, the Jewish historian, was *ashamed to mention it*, as bringing a *disgrace* on the *father* of his *nation*." (Orton.) But if the historian felt so much for the credit of his nation, what must have been the sensations of the Royal Culprit, humbled under Nathan's rebuke, the past, the present, and the future, stood before him. The ignominy of ancestors surpassed by his own personal self depravation. Uriah's bed defiled, his blood treacherously shed, and shed by that prince, who should have defended his honour, and rewarded his valour, were acts of treason against his God, which extorted the confession, "against thee, thee only have I sinned;" but this was *only figuratively* true; for in reality, besides his sin against God, and besides his foul offences against Uriah, he had rendered Bathsheba an adulteress, and had bastardized his own and her issue in the babe whom the hand of death snatched from infamy. He had tarnished the character of the mother of Solomon; scandalized morality and religion, and brought a sword up in his own house. Oppressed under all this weight of sin and shame, he again *figuratively* exclaims, "Behold!

I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;" meaning his mother *Tamar*. In this view of David's acknowledgment of a sinful *origin*, we have at once, a scriptural, rational and consistent evidence of its propriety, founded on a series of undeniable and indubitable facts; but if we attempt to affix the meaning usually annexed to it, of inbred *sin*, *original sin*, or of depravity in embryo, in the unformed fœtus, we are immediately but bewildered and lost, in a maze of absurdities and contradictions; for David's words neither assert nor imply that his mother had conceived or made *him* a sinner. Your supporting texts shall now be noticed in their arranged order.

Second. "Were by *nature* the *children* of *wrath* even as *others*." (Ephesians II, 3.) But who were these *others?* and who those like them, who were the *children* of wrath? Were they really *infants*, or *little children?* If they *were*, your point is proved; but if they were only self corrupted adults, it will prove against you. It will serve as evidence, that this *depravity* originated among mankind *otherwise* than by Adam's apostacy. St. Paul's account of these persons, Ephesians II, 1—3, is this; "and you hath he "quickened, who were *dead* in *trespasses* and *sins*; "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the "course of this world, according to the prince of the "power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the "children of disobedience: Among whom also we all "had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of "our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the

"mind; and were by *nature* the children of *wrath*, "even as others." Now, sir, it is undeniably evident, that the persons here spoken of were adults. *Adult corrupt Jews* were the *children* of *wrath;* and the *others* of an equally corrupt *nature*, were adult *Gentiles:* even such persons as under the stimulating influence of the *lusts* of the *flesh* and of Satan, had fulfilled the desires of the *flesh* and of the *mind;* and it is impossible that infants or little children should have been of this description. The degraded state of nature in which they thus were, was not the same as that in which they were born. The nature inherited at birth is mentioned in Romans II, 14, 15. "For "when the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by *na-* "*ture* the things contained in the law, these, *not hav-* "*ing* the law, are a law unto themselves. Who shew "the work of the law written in their hearts, their "conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, "the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one anoth- "er." From this state of *nature*, endued with such power and knowledge, they *fell*, into the *nature* which was "*dead*," and which constituted them the "children of wrath." This was accomplished by sin, which, when "finished, brought forth death." It was not one sin only, that effected this *lamentable depravity*, but a *course* of sin, for they "*were dead in trespasses and sins.*" Adam's *one* offence subjected them to temporal *wrath*, but their own *many* offences to the *wrath* to *come;* "for the *wrath* of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of *men.*" And in the judgment day, agree-

ably to gospel declaration, none shall come into condemnation but for their own deeds, done by themselves, in their own bodies. Infants and little children are, of course, incapable of guilt or of condemnation in that approaching day of righteous retribution. And from hence, were there no other proof, it would follow, that the above adult Jews and Gentiles were in *nature* degenerated from the *nature* which they inherited at their births.*

Third. "Adam begat a son in his own *likeness*, and after his *own image*." Not being disposed to remark on a common perversion of this text, by a false comment often made, that *Cain* the *murderer*, was this son, we will hear what Moses says of the birth of this *illustrious* son, and his true character; and what is truly worthy of special observation is, that his birth and character are twice distinctly mentioned, and so mentioned as being *interestingly* important. The first account is in Genesis iv, 25, 26. "And Adam "knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called "his name *Seth*. For God, said she, hath appointed "me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew. "And to Seth, to him also, there was born a son; "and he called his name Enos: then began men to "call upon the name of the Lord." "Eve must "have received on this occasion, some divine commu-"nication, else how could she have known that this "son was appointed in the place of Abel, to continue

* See note at the end of this letter.

"that line by which the Messiah was to come? And "it is worthy of remark, that Seth's posterity *alone* "continued after the flood; when all the other fami- "lies of the earth were destroyed. Noah being the "tenth descendant from Adam, through Seth." (Clarke.)

As the *holy line* was to be thus preserved through Seth, and the whole earth to be repeopled by his posterity, Deity saw fit to exhibit another edition of the history of man, which excluded all mention of Cain and Abel, and placed Seth under Adam, as the distinguished progenitor of the succeeding generations. This occupies the whole fifth chapter of Genesis, the three first verses speak thus: "This is the book of "the generations of Adam. In the day that God cre- "ated man, in the likeness of God made he him: "Male and female created he them, and called their "name Adam, in the day when they were created. "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and "begat a *son*, in his *own likeness* after *his image*, and "called his name Seth." Now, sir, permit me in this view of the subject, to introduce here your two next supporting texts, that we may the better discover their scriptural correspondence.

Fourth. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an "unclean? not one;" and fifth, "What is man "that he should be clean? and he who is born of wo- "man that he should be righteous?" The case of Seth with other scriptural examples must furnish replies.

But as *truth* and *truth only*, *not victory*, is here sought, in order the better to ensure the attainment of this truth, I will place *your side* of these questions in a still stronger point of view. I will call in to your aid *one* of whose assistance I have already availed myself—I mean that great luminary *Adam Clarke*, L. L. D. "Adam begat a *son* in his own likeness, "after his image; words nearly the same with those, "chapter 1, 26. *Let us make man in our image, af-* "*ter our likeness.* What this image and likeness of "God were, we have already seen (in his comment "on chapter 1, 26,) and we may rest assured, that "the *same* image and likeness are not here meant. "The *body* of Adam was created provisionally im- "mortal: that is, while he continued obedient, he "could not die. The *soul* of Adam was created in "the moral image of God, in *knowledge*, *righteous-* "*ness*, and *true holiness.* He had now sinned, and "consequently had lost this moral resemblance to his "maker; he had also become *mortal*, through his "breach of the law. His image and likeness were "therefore widely different at *this time* from what "they were before: and his begetting children in this "image and likeness, plainly implies that they were "imperfect like himself, mortal like himself, sinful "and corrupt like himself. For it is impossible, that "he being impure, fallen from the Divine image, "could beget a pure and holy offspring, unless we "could suppose it possible that a *bitter* fountain could "send forth *sweet* waters; or that a *cause* could pro- "duce *effects* totally dissimilar from itself. What is

"here said of Seth, might have been said of all the "other children of Adam, as they were begotten after "his fall; but the sacred writer has thought proper to "mark it only in this instance." (Clarke's commentary.) Perhaps *truth* was never before with *less design*, or *greater facility, subverted;* nor errour *unintentionally*, more ingeniously disguised, than in the foregoing construction *of*, and reasoning *on* the above scriptures. A candid but strict scrutiny therefore becomes requisite.

Errour is in the *first* place perceived to lurk in the ascription of immortality to Adam's body; it never possessed such a principle; the *principle* or communicative power of immortality, existed *only* in the fruit of the tree of life: and the being precluded therefrom, rendered his death, and that of his posterity inevitable. From that hour they began to die, although the primeval constitutional vigour withstood the inroads of nine centuries and upwards; yet finally it sunk, for want of the immortal restorative forfeited by disobedience. And as Adam's bodily constitution was no part of the divine image; so *Seth's* death was no proof that he was born corrupt and debased; for merely dying is no evidence of personal depravity; for if so, then even Christ was corrupt.

Errour in the next place is discernable, in restricting as above, the divine image in Adam, to *moral* resemblance; for "The *image* and *likeness* must necessarily be *intellectual;* his *mind* must have been "formed, after the nature and perfections of his God. "The human *mind is still endowed with the most*

"*extraordinary capacities;* it was more so when "coming out of the hands of his Creator." (Clarke.) What degrees of intellectual capacity were confered on Adam, when created—in what measure impaired, or whether impaired at all by his transgression, are topicks on which the scriptures are totally silent. Of this silence each visionary avails himself, giving scope to his imagination, to form such fancies as his creed, caprice, or prejudices may dictate; hence arise distorted contrasts betwixt Adam in Eden, under the law of innocence; and Adam placed in another condition of probation, under the *law* of *faith*.

But adhering to the more sure word of prophecy, let us therefrom endeavour to ascertain the real moral character of Seth, begotten in the *image* and *likeness* of Adam, while *under* the *law* of *faith*.

Eve, under the influence of "*divine communication*," declares him "a seed appointed instead of Abel." Malachi alluding to Adam and Eve's marriage and offspring, chapter II, 15, gives as a reason why God made but one wife for Adam, viz. "That, he might seek a godly seed;" or as the margin reads, a "*seed of God*." And that Deity was not disappointed, but found in Abel such a *seed* as he looked for, God himself "*testified*," bearing "witness that Abel was righteous." Hebrew XI, 4. That Seth was the father of a "*seed*," or *son* like *himself* and like *Abel*, cannot be denied, unless we discredit Moses, who plainly represents Enos as a pious son, devoutly joining with his religious father Seth, in acceptably worshipping the true God. Genesis IV, 26. When

we thus discover a "godly seed," worshipping their Creator in spirit and in truth, and are informed that this seed was begotten in the *image* and *likeness* of their venerable ancestor, what are we thence to conclude? Did these "sweet streams" issue from a "bitter fountain?" Did an *evil* cause produce these *righteous* effects? Did *clean* things, or children, issue from unclean Eve? Or are we to reverse the argument, and infer that this clean offspring—this righteous posterity—this "godly seed," prove that the parents were like them, holy and acceptable unto God? But it is replied, Adam "had now sinned and "consequently had lost the moral resemblance to his "maker, therefore it was impossible, that he being "impure, could beget a pure and holy offspring; and "besides, that what is said here of Seth, might have "been said of all the other children of Adam, as they "were all begotten after his fall."

This reply indicates a tenacious remembrance of Adam's *fall*, and of *infered* consequences to his posterity; but a strange and unaccountable forgetfulness of pardon and restoring grace through the promised Saviour. If Adam "begat Seth and all his other children after his fall," so he likewise begat them not before; but *after*, and *under* the gracious covenant of redemption. Even under the dispensation, wherein "The *free gift* came upon *all* men, unto justification of life." (Romans v, 18.) And you, yourself, sir, have well observed, that, "As the image of God was lost through *unbelief*, so the *same image* is restored by faith." Abide then but by your own doctrine,

and only admit that our first parents truly believed the promise made to them in Eden; then it will be neither strange nor difficult for you to conceive an holy character, under a new dispensation, confered on this first believing pair. From this "holy root," you will discover how "holy branches" may have shot forth. Ceasing to call those "*common* or *unclean*, whom God hath cleansed," you will then admit, that "clean or holy" children were begotten by Adam and brought forth by Eve. And being thus taught, you will renounce the preposterous idea of *infants bringing their own damnation with them from their mothers' womb.* And joyfully adopting Christ's doctrine and method of teaching when you preach, you, by his authority, will declare unto your hearers, that "Except they be converted, and become as *little children*, they *shall not* enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew xviii, 4.

NOTE.

AS the forementioned quotation from Ephesians ii, 1—3, is most generally resorted to, as the supposed strong hold of hereditary *depravation* and divine *wrath*, in the Calvinistick sense of those terms; it may be expedient here, to advert more fully to the apostles meaning in his address to the Ephesians, upon their former condition of *death*, and the state of *wrath* in which all men are by *nature*. Not to repeat here what has been already said on this subject, I have to remark, first; that nothing could be more opposite to

St. Paul's meaning, than to suppose that Adam's transgression had entailed this spiritual death, and exposure to future divine wrath, upon any of his descendants; for all such ideas are wholly subverted by this apostles own words in Romans v; "Nevertheless, "death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them "that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's "transgression, who is the *figure* of him that was to "come. But not as the *offence*, so also is the free "gift. For if through the offence of one many be "dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by "grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath "abounded unto many. And not as it was by one "that sinned, so is the gift. For the judgment was "by *one* to condemnation, but the free gift is of many "offences unto *justification*. For if by one man's "offence death reigned by one; much more they "which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of "righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. "Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came "upon all men to condemnation, even so by the right-"eousness of one, the free gift came upon all men un-"to justification of life. For as by one man's disobe-"dience, many were made sinners, so by the obedi-"ence of one, shall many be made righteous. More-"over, the law entered, that the offence might abound. "But where *sin abounded, grace did much more a-"bound.*" (Verse 14 to 20 inclusive.)

In this *contrast* of the *effect* of Adam's transgression on his posterity, with the *effect* of Christ's interposition in behalf of the same posterity, St. Paul most

explicitly and unequivocally declares the latter greatly to transcend the former; so that in whatever sense *death* or *wrath* may be supposed to affect Adam's posterity for his offence, death and wrath in the same sense are more than removed and counteracted by the obedience and mediation of Christ.

Mankind remaining subjected to the sentence which God pronounced on our first parents, in Genesis III, 15—19, renders them, agreeably to St. Paul's views, *children of wrath by nature*, but *justification to life through the free gift, having come upon all men*, mankind consequently are through the free gift, objects of mercy, and become subjects of Christ's quickening energy, for in Christ "was *life*; and the *life* was the light of men." "That was the true light, which lighteth *every* man that cometh into the world." John I, 4, 9. As the sun's rays not only create our day, but also diffuse heat, and shed vegetative life around; so Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, not only illuminates every man by internal operation; but also imparts to each, moral energy.

And consequently, I have secondly, to remark, that the *death* in tresspasses and sins, mentioned by St. Paul, as having been the condition of the Ephesians, was produced in them, not by Adam, but by themselves; and the manner and nature of it are most clearly described by the same apostle, in Romans I, 18—32. "For the wrath of God is revealed from "heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness "of men, who detain the truth in unrighteousness. "For what is to be known of God is manifest in

"them; for God hath shewed *it* to them. For those "things of him which are invisible, both his eternal "power and Godhead, are clearly seen from the crea- "tion of the world, being understood by the things "which are made, so that they are without excuse: "Because knowing God, they did not glorify *him* as "a God, neither were thankful, but became vain in "their reasonings, and their foolish heart was darken- "ed. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and "changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an "image in the likeness of corruptible man, and of "birds, and of four-footed creatures and reptiles. "Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness "through the desires of their hearts, to dishonour "their bodies among themselves; Who changed the "truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served "the creature above the creator, who is blessed forev- "er! Amen. Therefore God gave them up to vile "affections; for even their women changed the natur- "al use to that which is against nature: And like- "wise, also men, leaving the natural use of the wo- "man, burned in their lust toward each other, men "with men working filthiness, and receiving in them- "selves the just recompence of their errour. And as "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, "God gave them up to an undiscerning mind, to do "the things which were not expedient. Filled with "all injustice, fornication, maliciousness, covetousness, "wickedness; full of envy, murder, contention, de- "ceit, malignity: Whisperers, backbiters; haters "of God, violent, proud: boasters, inventers of evil

"things: disobedient to parents, without understand-
"ing, covenant-breakers, without natural affection,
"implacable, unmerciful. Who knowing the right-
"eous judgment of God, that they who practise such
"things are worthy of death, not only do the same,
"but have pleasure in those that practise them."

The subject of depravity shall be concluded in my next.

LETTER VI.

SIR,

THAT notion of a depravity which renders it the "*crime* of mankind, as well as their *misery*, that they are ruined in body, soul, and spirit," you consider as further taught in Job xiv, 4. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" And also as taught in (chapter xv, verse 14.) "What is man that he should be clean, and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous?" But as these have been anticipated in the exposition of the text last preceding, I shall now proceed to the sixth, viz. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned." All important questions here are, who is this *natural man?* Is he a little child? Or, is he a *self*-perverted, *self*-vitiated *adult* person? If of the latter description, his blindness affords neither evidence, nor exam-

ple of the real "effects of Adam's fall." But if of the former description, that is, if he is a little child, his ignorance and incapacity of knowledge, are things perfectly innocent and excusable. Macknight, renders "*natural man*," "*animal man*;" and defines him to be "One who makes the faculties of his ani- "mal nature, that is, his *senses*, his *passions*, and his "natural *reason darkened* by *prejudices*, the measure "of truth, and the rule of his conduct, *without* paying "any regard to the discoveries of revelation. Of this "character were the (self-sufficient) heathen philoso- "phers, to whom the doctrines of the gospel were "*foolishness*. Also the Jewish scribes, and those false "teachers, whom Jude, verse 19, calls *animal men*, "not having the spirit. These all rejected the gos- "pel, because they could not explain its doctrines by "their own principles or preconceived notions."

And with this accords Christ's own account of the character, condition, opportunities, and *wilful*, (not *hereditary*) blindness and aggravated guilt of the *animal* and *diabolical* men of his day. "He that believ- "eth not, is condemned already, because he hath not "believed in the name of the only begotten Son of "God. And this is the condemnation, that light is "come into the world, and men loved darkness rather "than light, because their *deeds* were evil. For eve- "ry one that doeth evil, hateth the light; neither com- "eth to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." (John III, 18, 19, 20.) The inability to perceive spiritual things, of these unregenerate men, of whom Christ thus complained, arose plainly, not from

deficiency of light to *see*, nor of means to obtain *knowledge;* and therefore they are condemned, because they rejected the light, and hated the knowledge. Their wilfulness produced their unbelief, and their unbelief their destruction. The prevalence of their animal propensions over reason and conscience, was not from hereditary descent, but from personal deeds of iniquity; so that according to the foregoing doctrines of Christ, these *natural*, *animal*, or *diabolical* men, were the wretched victims of their own folly, self-blinded, self-corrupted, and self-ruined.

Seventh and eighth texts. In your note of page 82, you connect Isaiah VIII, 20, with Ephesians IV, 8, and adduce them as descriptive of "the natural effects of the fall." But surely your selection for such a purpose is truly abortive and unhappy. For the former is wholly foreign to your purpose, and the latter wholly against you. The former reads thus, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." This text, therefore, has no more affinity with Adam's fall, than it has with the erection, or fall of the tower of Babel. Ephesians IV, 18, being best explained by its own connexion with the verse preceding, and with that which follows, I therefore shall insert all three. "This I say, therefore, and testify in the "Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles "walk, in the vanity of their mind. Having the un-"derstanding darkened, being alienated from the life "of God through the ignorance that is in them, be-"cause of the *blindness* of their *heart*. Who being

"past feeling, have given themselves over unto lascivi-
"ousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."

It should seem unnecessary to add further proof than this, that the degeneracy which has in but too many cases degraded human nature even below brutality itself; is neither hereditary nor necessary, but is avoidable, voluntary and wholly the effect of the crimes of those, who in the abuse of rich mercies, have destroyed themselves: a few, however, out of many other scripture declarations to this effect, I shall here insert. "For the wrath of God is revealed from "heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness "of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. "Because that which may be *known of God is mani-*"*fest* in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of "the world are clearly seen, being understood by the "things that are made, even his eternal power and "godhead; so that they are without excuse. And "even as they did not like to retain God in their "knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate "mind." Much more to this effect, as before noted, is contained in this first chapter of Romans, whereby it is proved, that the blindness and degeneracy of animal men, is not from Adam, but is from themselves through temptation, and as really so, as Adam's was from himself, when yielding to Eve.

If further proofs are requisite, then sir, recollect, that "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are "lost: In whom the god of this world, hath blinded "the mind of them who believe not, lest the light of

"the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of "God, should shine into them." II Corinthians, IV, 3, 4. These persons were not blinded and ruined by Adam's fall, but judicially as a punishment for their own obstinate rejection of Christ and his gospel, they were given over to the blinding influence of satan, even as those mentioned in II. Thessalonians, whom God gave up to "him whose coming is after "the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and "lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of un-"righteousness in them who perish, *because* they re-"ceived not the love of the truth, that they might be "saved. And for this cause God shall send them "strong delusion, that they should believe a lie. That "they all might be damned, who believed not the "truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (II, 9, 10.) And with this new-testament doctrine of *self* corruption, agrees the old-testament doctrine in Deuteronomy XXXII, 5. "They have *corrupted them-*"*selves*, their spot is not the spot of his children: "They are a *perverse* and *crooked generation.*"

I am now to remark on the ninth and the last proposed text, which is that of Galatians V, 17. "For "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit "against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to "the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye "would." This seems to be adduced as evidence of hereditary depravity, by so construing this text, as to make it teach, that hereditary depravity is so great in all men, as that even in all the regenerate, an unsubdued portion of it still remains; which causes a

perpetual warfare betwixt this remnant of old Adam, and the communicated Spirit of the new man; here called the Spirit against the flesh.

This very plausible argument is, however, wholly incorrect, and fallacious; and for the following reasons. First. Because this text, although truly descriptive of the Galatian professors, and of many others resembling them in unfaithfulness to their high calling, and to the Spirit of Christ imparted to them; yet it was not applicable in the *same sense* to *upright*, *faithful* and *obedient* believers. For proof of this assertion, we only need to observe strictly, the difference of St. Paul's manner of address to these Galatians, and to other unfaithful christians; and his addresses to christians whom he deemed faithful to the Spirit, and circumspect in life and conversation. To the former he writes, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth." "Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" "Ye did run well, who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth?" "I stand in doubt of you." "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." "If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Here then were the degenerate christians to whom it was said, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." And but too much like those of Galatia were the professors in Corinth, who were so grossly corrupt as to have suffered an incestuous person to

abide in their communion; so *sensual*, as to have become drunken at the Lord's table; and so contentious as to have bandied into parties—for Paul, for Apollos, and for Cephas, even to forgetfulness of Him, who was crucified for them. And hence, said St. Paul unto them, "I brethren, could not speak unto you as "unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes "in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with "meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet are ye able. For ye are yet *carnal;* for "whereas there is among you *envying*, and *strife*, "and *divisions;* are ye not carnal and *walk as men?*" And Paul when rebuking the Hebrew christians for stubborn or indolent stupidity, says, "Ye are dull of "hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be "teachers, ye have need that one teach you *again*, "which be the first principles of the oracles of God: "and are *become* such as have need of milk; and not "of strong meat. For every one that useth milk, is "unskilled in the word of righteousness; for he is a "babe." (Hebrews v, 11, 12, 13.) These Hebrew babes, and the Corinthian babes, were not young converts in the healthful vigour of their *first love*. But like the bewitched Galatians, were fallen from the Spirit into fleshly lusts; and more resembled children, debilitated and deformed by disease, than they did those faithful converts, who, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and fed with the sincere milk of the word, thereby were growing up from little children into young men, and thence into the piety and

knowledge of fathers, filled with the measure of the stature and fulness which is in Christ.

It was unto such as these latter christians that St. Paul wrote after this manner; "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new." "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them, who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the "flesh, but after the Spirit." And of himself he asserts, "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." Hence, therefore, it follows, that the enthraling fleshly conflicts of the Galatians, are no more characteristick of the condition of faithful christians, than the diseased bodies of the *intemperate* are, of the healthful vigour of constitutions improved by due exercise, and the strictest temperance. And consequently, this degeneracy of unfaithful believers, affords no proof whatsoever of an invincible, hereditary depravity derived from Adam.

Reason second. As the corruptions of backslidden, lukewarm professors, afford no evidence of an hereditary depravity, so neither does the warfare experienced by faithful christians, afford proof of *old Adam* still lurking within them. For although the apostle exhorts the Ephesians to "put off the old man," iv, 22, he does not mean any thing derived from Adam, but "their (own) former conversation which was corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts," and which they practiced when in heathenism. And writing to the Collo-

sians, III, 9, he says, "ye have put off the old man with his deeds;" which assertion is incompatible with a still inward, lurking remains of him. The old man in each text is a mere metaphor, to signify the vicious *inclinations*, *habits* and sinful practices, when in a state of unbelief. But no intimation is thereby given as to the origin of such sinfulness.

As to the warfare experienced by real and spiritual christians, it is no difficult matter to account for it; since they still inhabit bodies of flesh and blood, are exposed to temptation by a subtle and invisible adversary, and are placed in a world at enmity with them. Christ himself had to conflict with all of these. And the servant is not to expect to be above his Lord.

Having thus replied to your numerous texts, I have now to combat your argument adduced in support of them; and which *apparently* is so formidable as to seem an host in itself.

Your argument. "The man who will pretend that "the body and soul, in all their faculties, have not suf- "fered by the fall, is bound to prove, that Adam, be- "fore his transgression, was subject to inordinate ani- "mal passions, to disease, to false reasonings, to a "perverted conscience, and to an uncontrolable heart. "He must prove that man, in the image of God, was "as weak, wretched and wicked, as he now is, with- "out it."

In order clearly to perceive, and fully to comprehend the strength and conclusiveness of this reasoning, I will here reduce it to syllogistical form; and so

reduced it will thus stand. The souls and bodies of all men, in *all their faculties*, are so impaired, as that from thence, all human weakness, wretchedness and wickedness, result. This impaired or injured condition of all human faculties, productive of all human weakness, wretchedness and wickedness, was wholly caused by Adam's fall. Therefore the man who will pretend that the bodies and souls of all men, in all their faculties, have not thus suffered by the fall, is bound to prove that Adam, before his transgression, was subject to inordinate animal passions, to disease, to false reasonings, to a perverted conscience, and an uncontrolable heart, &c. &c. But this argument thus tested by syllogistical form and rules, will not endure the trial, for when examined, both your major and minor propositions are only taken for granted, although both the one and the other are most expressly denied in this controversy: consequently your inference is inconclusive, and of course your whole argument is good for nothing, because it proves nothing.

It is not, however, designed in this controversy, to deny that Adam's posterity are sufferers by his fall; but it is denied that they are sufferers in the manner, and to the extent which Calvinism supposes: for if sufferers in *all* our *faculties* of *soul* and *body*, so as to render all our wickedness unavoidable; our wickedness is itself a nullity, and *we ourselves* are neither moral agents nor fit subjects of divine law, nor yet invested with that responsibility of character, which admits of the final decisions of a judgment day. In this controversy it is also doubted that our first parents

when created, were invested with such high perfections of either soul or body as Calvinism seems to imagine. For if their bodies were in themselves immortal, how came their mortality to be effected by debaring them from access to the tree of life? (Genesis III, 22, 23, 24.) If they were not liable to false reasoning, how came Eve to be deceived? If not subject to inordinate animal appetite, how came the pleasing appearance of the forbidden fruit to be so inviting to the eye of Eve? And if both Adam's and Eve's hearts were not accessable to unbelief and a perverted conscience, pray why did they fall at all?

Calvinistick ideas of Adam's primeval perfection, seem therefore, to border upon extravagance; and not to be reconcilable with a condition of peccability. Whatever loss we may have sustained by the sin of Adam, yet ample indemnification therefor, appears to have been made to us by Christ. For if "In Adam *all* have died;" so the *same all*, and in the *same sense*, "In Christ are made alive." If, "By the *offence of one*, judgment came upon *all men* to condemnation: even so by the *righteousness* of *one* the *free gift*, came *upon all men* to justification of life." And, "As by one man's disobedience many were *made sinners;* so by the obedience of one, shall *many* be made righteous." So that "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign, through righteousness unto eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (St. Paul.)

With all this weight of evidence before us, of the aboundings of divine mercy unto all men, in overballancing their loss by Adam, through gain confered by Christ: How deeply is it to be regretted, that Calvinism should so exaggerate the evils of the one event: and so depreciate the grace of the other; as to attempt to consign over to remediless ruin, innumerable millions of the human race, by overwhelming them with such a burthen of depravity from Adam, as that the grace and power derived from Christ, are deemed inadequate to remove.

But to return. Your deceptive argument, sir, not having endured the trial of a strict examination, permit me to aid your side of the question; by adducing a portion of scripture, by many deemed conclusively unanswerable in behalf of depravity as taught by Calvinism. This scripture was spoken by Christ himself. And was made scripture by the recording pen of the beloved disciple John, in III, 5, 6. "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a *man* be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the *flesh*, is *flesh;* and that which is born of the *spirit*, is *spirit*." The evidence supposed to result from this text, as stamping authority on Calvinistick views of human depravity, is generally thus infered, viz. That as every man needs to be new born by the Spirit; in order to become qualified for entering into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore the first or *fleshly birth*, imparts to *every man* a *nature* so corrupt and sinful; and so debilitated in all its powers and faculties, as that every man

thereby is rendered as unable to co-operate with the power of the spirit which regenerates him, as Lazarus was with the power that raised him from the dead; or, as Adam was with that by which he was created; each and all being alike passive under the divine energizing influence. But this construction of the *fleshly* and the *spiritual birth*, although strictly accordant with the assertion of Calvin, that infants "Before they see the light of this life, are in the sight of God filthy and spotted;" and that "their whole nature is a certain seed of sin, which cannot but be hateful and abominable unto God." Yet still, both this construction and this assertion, are in direct contradiction to right reason, and to Christ's own doctrines. It has been already ascertained that *sin*, not in a figurative or metaphorical sense, but in the true and real signification of the term, that is, as justly subjecting the offender to all the penalty of law, can consist but only in the transgression of law. Hence, therefore, it necessarily results, that nothing can correctly and strictly be deemed sin, or sinfulness, but that whatever it is, whereby law is transgressed. And hence it indubitably further follows, that mankind cannot possibly be born sinful, because they cannot either in the womb, or in the moment of birth, transgress any law human or divine; and to affirm the contrary of this, although by Calvin himself, is but to assert the most palpable nonsense.

Christ, the unerring teacher, when urging the necessity of the new birth, did not affirm it of little children, but of adult persons. He on some occasions,

contrasted infantile innocency, with adult degeneracy. For "there arose a reasoning among them, (adults) "which of them should be the greatest; and Jesus "perceiving the thought of their heart, called a little "child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, "and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be *con-* "*verted* and become as little children, ye shall not en- "ter into the kingdom of heaven: Whosoever there- "fore shall humble himself as this little child, the "same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Again, "Then were brought unto him little children, "that he should put his hands on them and pray, and "the disciples rebuked those that brought them. But "when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and "said unto them, suffer the little children to come un- "to me, and forbid them not: for of such is the king- "dom of God. Verily, whosoever shall not receive "the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise "enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, "put his hands upon them, and blessed them." But whilst we thus hear declared, *infantile meetness* for the kingdom of God, by him, unto whom that kingdom belongs: and behold him exhibit little children, as becoming and instructive examples for his adult disciples to copy after, in order to their advancement in his blessed kingdom. So on the other hand, when he unmasks the actual iniquity of hearts really depraved, through the deceitful lusts; it is not the hearts of little children, but of self corrupted adults that he uncovers. As thus "out of the heart of *men*, pro- "ceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

"thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lascivious-"ness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. "All these things came from within, and defile the "*man.*" (Mark VII, 21, 22, 23.) To ascribe therefore, this depravity of the worst of self corrupted men, either to all men universally, or more particularly to the infant race of mankind, is a species of slander and vile detraction, expressly forbidden by that commandment which says, "thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Should it in reply be asked, what could Christ consistently have intended, by teaching that the subjects of the fleshly birth, need a spiritual birth, in order to the attainment of life eternal, unless thereby he intended to teach that same universal depravity which is taught by Calvinism? Such question being propounded and insisted on, would peremptorily demand an inquiry into the true meaning of *being flesh* from the fleshly birth; and a further inquiry into the operation and nature of the spiritual birth. And as it is a *fair* question, and one which should *not* be *evaded*, I therefore shall endeavour to make such inquiries, as necessarily result from it.

To be constituted *flesh*, by the *fleshly* birth, has two meanings, which can neither be disputed nor denied. First, it signifies that the child's person is constituted of materials similar to those which compose the persons of the parents from whom it descended. And secondly it indicates the communication of like animal appetites, with those of the parents, as hunger, thirst, sexual propensions, &c. and which in them-

selves are neither virtuous nor vicious. But there is likewise therein another implication, viz. That of "natural affection." Here some dispute may arise, as Calvinism seems to take for granted, that all natural affection is unholy affection. This however cannot be admitted; because this affection is implanted in human nature, by the forming hand of God himself. And is sanctioned by the authority of divine law, as witness the fifth commandment and its implications. These affections of human nature, are the legitimate offspring of the *fleshly* birth, are impressed by the hand of God himself, on the human heart. And their proper exercise is expressly enjoined by divine law. And to all this we may add, that these *affections*, when duly cultivated and improved, are delightful sweetners of human life; render human society and intercourse amiable and endearing; kindly stimulate to the performance of the important duties of relative life; and when with due influence, they actuate husband and wife, parent and child, brother and sister, friend, relative and neighbour, they, by an union of hearts and hands, produce a condition of society bearing resemblance in no small degree, to that of the kingdom of heaven itself. To affirm therefore, that these affections are in themselves *sinful*, is no mark of either candour, or true wisdom. If natural affection is in itself a criminal affection, then certainly it ought if possible to be wholly suppressed, and exterminated from the human heart. But such an eradication would be not only a mutilation, but likewise a horrible depravation of the human heart; for St. Paul, in Ro-

mans I, 31, and in II Timothy, III, 3, ranks such as are "without natural affection," amongst the vilest persons and characters of that, and of future corrupt generations.

To be constituted *flesh* by the *fleshly* birth implies then most clearly, first, that the child's person is constituted of materials similar to those which compose the persons of the parents from whom it descended. Secondly, It imports that the animal appetites of the parents, such as hunger, thirst, and sexual propensions, are communicated with the animal nature to the offspring. And thirdly, It indicates the transmittal of the natural affections, viz. self love, love of parents, and kindred love of human kind, as well as conjugal affection. And although these affections of nature, are in themselves deemed sinful by the generality of Calvinists: yet they can never be proved to be sinful in themselves, however sinful may be their abuse and corruption. And this leads directly to a most important point, viz. To the *natural* affections, not as they are communicated by the *fleshly* birth, but as they become vitiated and depraved by abuse, by a criminal and habitual indulgence of them on forbidden objects. This corruption of human hearts, which is effected by repeated acts of iniquity, Calvinism mistakes for an effect of the fleshly birth. This mistake probably first arose from a misconception of St. Paul's account of this corruption, where he denominates it the *works* of the *flesh*. But from whatever cause it may have arisen, it has lead to the gross errour of ascribing to natural generation, what results only from

personal disobedience: and to the inconsistency of imputing to infancy, the detestable degeneracy of the most depraved adults. "Now the works of the *flesh* "are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, "uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, ha- "tred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, en- "vyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such "like." (Galatians v, 19, 20, 21.) This long catalogue of the crimes and pollutions of the most corrupt portion of adult transgressors, could never in any age or nation justly apply to the infant race of Adam: nor did St. Paul design it for them. And how strikingly different were his ideas concerning children, when like his divine master, he took occasion, from their characters, to instruct persons of adult years. "Brethren, be not children in understanding; howbeit, in *malice* be ye children." (1 Corinthians, XIV, 20.) "The greek word in this passage does not sig- "nify *malice*, but those *evil dispositions* which are "*contrary* to the *gentleness* and *innocence* of children; "particularly *envy*, *anger* and *strife*." (Macknight.)

The forementioned deeds of iniquity, termed by the apostle *the works of the flesh*, are not exhibited as the unavoidable fruits of the *fleshly birth*, but as the abuse of the appetites of nature, and as the corruption of the once uncorrupted affections of nature. Neither the natural appetites, nor the natural affections are ever in the scriptures either forbidden or condemned; but the natural affections are most powerfully and repeatedly enjoined and recommended, in order to the faithful performance of the relative duties. And conver-

sion itself consists, in a great degree, in the reimpression of *natural affection* upon hearts from which it had been obliterated by the *corroding* and *hardening works* of the *flesh*. For when Malichi predicted the reformation of the corrupted Jews under the preaching and ministry of John the Baptist, he expressed it in these terms. "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I smite the earth with a curse." (IV, 6.) And with Malichi, Ezekiel most strikingly agrees; for when prophesying of the far greater conversion of the posterity of the Jews of the dispersion, in the latter day's glory, he foretels it after this manner, viz. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye "shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all "your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also "will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within "you; and I will take away the *stony* heart out of "your *flesh*, and I will give you an heart of *flesh*." (XXXVI, 25, 26.) In this passage the word flesh occurs twice, but its meaning is different in each instance. It appears in the first to signify the same as *flesh* in Galatians v, 19, as already noticed, and producing the evil works there enumerated by the apostle. Here its evil work is an *heart* of *stone*, *cold*, *hard*, cruel, relentless and destitute of true natural affection. But as mentioned in the second place, it clearly implies an heart renewed in childlike tenderness of natural affection. And corresponding with its original implantation therein at the fleshly birth, by the forming hand of the Creator himself. But this regen-

erated *heart* of *flesh*, although thus bearing resemblance to the infantile *heart* of *flesh*, in kind and gentle affections to mankind; yet greatly transcends the latter, by rising into a participation of the divine nature. The one is mere uncorrupted human nature. The other is corrupted human nature rectified; but still rising higher through a spiritual and divine leaven energizing therein. Mere human nature in infancy may personally be innocent, and ceremonially be holy; and yet be destitute of that real holiness, which can exist *only* in divine love. In order to divine love, there must be divine knowledge; and consequently in order either to real sin, or real holiness, there must be first real knowledge of God. No stream can rise higher than its fountain head. On this principle it was that Christ affirmed, as we are now contemplating, viz. "that, which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that, which is born of the spirit, is spirit." This therefore teaches, that though we receive at our natural birth, humane, kind and gentle affections, yet that we are incapable of rising into spiritual power and purity, until we are visited by "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." (John 1, 9.) For in Christ "was *life*, and the *life* was the *light* of men." Where this light of life is duly received and cherished, it imparts the "*new spirit*," spoken of as above by Ezekiel. But the destitution of this life giving light, can never be the crime of any human being, until first divinely tendered, but wilfully refused. Having thus enlarged on the fleshly birth, the spiritual now demands attention.

The operations of the Holy Spirit, in the infusion of a spiritual leaven into the expanding mind and conscience of the child, now discerning betwixt good and evil, and thereby becoming subjected to the obligation of the obedience of faith; and likewise the energizing influences of divine grace on the heart of the self corrupted, and self hardened adult sinner, restoring him to infantile tenderness and humility by converting influences, but raising him still higher, even to divine love and into "fellowship with the Father, and with his Son," through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, are represented by various similitudes; such as putting off the old, and putting on the new man, a new creation, a putting on Christ, and Christ being formed in them, by seed cast into the earth, springing up, &c.: but however instructive these several similitudes, perhaps none exceeds that of a new birth, in its aptness, strikingly portraying what thereby is intended. But this important subject, although thus variously elucidated, remains in some respects involved in impenetrable mystery. As saith the Lord, "The wind "bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound "thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or "whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the "spirit." The operations hereby declared incomprehensible, are not subjects of our inquiry; but what may be understood, we are obliged by duty to seek to know. And, happily, in aid of such researches into this subject, frequent allusions thereto occur in the hallowed language of divine inspiration. "As soon "as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

"Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring "forth? saith the Lord." "My little children of "whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be form-"ed in you." "To Christ Jesus I have begotten "you through the gospel." "The God and Father "of our Lord Jesus Christ, hath *begotten* us again." "Of his own will *begat* he us with the word of truth." "Being *born again*, (or begotten) not of *corruptible* "*seed*, but of incorruptible by the word of God." "Whosoever hath been *begotten* of God doth not "work sin, because his *seed* abideth in him, and he "cannot sin because he hath been *begotten* of God." (Macknight's translation.)

Other texts might be cited to the same effect, but these are sufficient, as implying striking parallels betwixt the natural and spiritual birth; as first, a father begetting; secondly, a seed energizing; thirdly, a conceiving and nourishing womb; fourthly, painful travail; and lastly, children born in due time. Now in following up these similitudes, we may, without difficulty, discover the errour and absurdity of affirming a total passiveness in the subjects of this heavenly birth, and detect the fallacy of comparing their condition to that of Lazarus raised from his grave; or of Adam when created. For such comparisons result not from any thing in the nature or operations of the new birth itself, but from a confusion of ideas injudiciously derived from other similitudes of conversion; whereby the mind losing sight of the character and circumstances of *birth*, improperly substitutes those of resurrection and creation in their place.

St. Paul says, "awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead." And again, "you hath he quickened who were dead." In these and in similar places, death means only a torpid condition, capable of stimulation into moral and spiritual perception and activity; not like to Lazarus in his grave, but rather resembling a man benumbed with the palsy, capable of seeking and subjecting himself to the electrick shock.

This same apostle again saith, "we are his workmanship *created* in Christ Jesus unto good works." But he also saith, "Be ye *renewed* in the spirit of your mind, and *put on* the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Here we discover a *creation*, not *passive* like Adam's during the formation of his body, and the infusion therein of a living soul; but one *active*, in which the Ephesian christians, as efficients, co-operated in the putting on of the new man divinely created. And this efficiency is still more fully expressed of the Colossian christians, thus, "Ye *have put off* the old man with "his deeds, and *have put on* the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." As the evangelical ideas of a spiritual resurrection and spiritual new creation, thus, unquestionably, involve in them agency as exercised by the subjects under such divine influence; so, in a still more expressive manner, agency is implied in the subjects of the new birth. In partruition, according to the course of nature, a being already formed, and already alive, struggles (in conjunction with the efforts of the mother in anguish) not into life or existence,

but into the light and manner of life in this world. But the spiritual birth involves therein much greater degrees of intelligent agency in the subject, than is implied in the subject of the natural birth. For the agency of both mother and child in the natural birth, is allegorically implied as all concentrating in the subject spiritually born. It is the subject spiritually born that conceives the impression of divine truth upon the heart. It is the persons own heart and mind eventually so born that nourishes up the divinely implanted principle, until Christ's mind and spirit becomes fully formed in them; "for the change which God produces in men's dispositions and actions, by the truths of the gospel impressed on their minds, is so great, that it may be called a begetting them anew." (Macknight.) It is the soul itself struggling into a new life of faith working by love, that practises the self denial of ceasing to do evil—that takes up the cross of learning to do well—that drinks of the bitter waters of repentance—and that laboriously brings forth the fruits meet therefor. Actively he hears, reads and meditates the divine word, which kills and yet makes him alive. He falls under the threatenings of the law, but taking hold of that truth *that God is, and is a rewarder of all who diligently seek him*, (Hebrews xi, 6) he draws nigh to God by the importunity of prayer, by humble confessions of sin, and by pleading the promises of the Saviour to such as ask, seek and knock. Seeking forgiveness of sins, he endeavours heartily to forgive all who may have offended him. And recollecting the great promise of Christ, that God will

"give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him." (Luke xi, 13.) He asks for the Spirit, and in due time, being baptized therewith, and believing on Christ with the heart unto righteousness, he joyfully emerges into the light, liberty and privileges of God's children.*

But to close all further allusions to the *circumstances* of *birth*, I would here observe, that other similitudes strongly indicate the indispensable necessity of human co-operation with divine agency in order to true conversion. This is clearly manifest from the case of the stony ground hearer, who perished, not through lack of divine influence, but because he had not "root in *himself*." (Matthew xiii, 21.) It also is further denoted in the crop of a matured harvest,

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* In opposition to the doctrine of the new birth being gradual and progressive, and not the production of an instantaneous, irresistible divine energy, it is sometimes asked, "what would become of a person in whom it commenced and was progressing, should he die before its completion? Would he be saved or lost?" To such queries, perhaps the best reply occurs in Luke xiii, 23, 24. "Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, *Strive* to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Should this admonitory reply not silence the caviling objector, then let him reply to the following queries. What becomes of an unborn infant, which, being quickened, yet expires in the womb? Does its soul exist amongst separate spirits? And will its body be raised up in the day of resurrection? Perhaps a due and satisfactory solution of the difficulties in the latter questions, might open the way to obviate, by a more direct reply, all difficulty existing in the questions first proposed.

where "the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself." (Mark iv, 28.) And still much more *explicitly* and *strenuously* is it taught, in complaints against sinners for neglect of repentance and reformation; and in exhortations, commandments and promises, all tending to excite them, under the influence of hope, and fear, of threatenings, and of promises, to turn "from disobedience to the wisdom of the just," and from the condemnation through unbelief, to that salvation which is by faith in the Son of God.

As it is inexpedient to cite here the multitude of texts, all incontestibly urging sinners to a co-operation with the efforts of the divine spirit, in reclaiming them from sin to holiness; so I shall here conclude the subject of an *hereditary universal depravity* of human nature as taught by Calvinism, by remarking thereon, as follows, viz. First. That if it were possible to involve mankind in such a depravation of all their natural and moral powers and faculties, such depravity being hereditary, and not in consequence of their own personal violation of law, would be a mere nullity, as it would utterly disqualify its subjects from all moral agency whatsoever, and consequently from every degree of accountability.

Remark second. The necessity of a spiritual birth as taught by Christ, and as is made manifest in the foregoing researches, arises not from a total corruption of our whole nature by Adam, but from our nature as derived from him being but *mere* human nature. For the first Adam was "made a living soul," and hath transmitted the living soul to us, but the "last Adam

was made a quickening spirit." "And as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Corinthians, xv, 45, 49.) In this gospel view of the subject, we behold Christ, by his spiritual energy, producing the new birth, raising men, not merely from the effects of their own personal depravation through "the deceitful lusts," but also above the nature wherewith born, before such corruption of it. We behold him raising them not only above Adam's state after his fall, but also as to the real principle of righteousness and true holiness, above any possessed by Adam and Eve in paradise. For the condition of faith in Christ is preferable to a mere state of innocency, separate from the advantages of grace by him.

And lastly. As sinners, called to partake of the spiritual birth, are not only rendered capable of co-operation with divine regenerating influences of grace; but also, as God requires of them such co-action, and as the failure of such required co-operation is the reason why all men are not born again; so it is a most lamentable and deadly errour of Calvinism, to tell sinners they have no power to do any thing towards their own salvation; they being through an *hereditary depravity* as spiritually *impotent* as stocks and stones, or as Ezekiel's dry bones.

Hopkinsianism to be entered upon in my next letter.

LETTER VII.

SIR,

HOPKINSIANISM, as you are well aware, claims high rank amongst systems deemed orthodox by numerous votaries. So aspiring indeed are its pretensions, as boldly to assume the lofty title of Calvinism improved. But this arrogancy you have humbled in the dust; for in your contrast you have compelled it to take rank, as holding the first place only in the class of heresies.

As it is highly unbecoming to intermeddle where domestick difficulties occur, I shall therefore endeavour not to irritate brethren against each other; but consider and treat Hopkinsians as, at least, the avowed friends, and ablest allies of Calvinists. For it was, that when Calvinism, hard pressed and goaded by the force of Arminian arguments, urged home by Whitby and others, that the subtle Edwards and his coadjutor, Bellamy, rallying in defence of the tottering fortress, expeditiously, and with singular dexterity devised means to repel the assailants.

EDWARDS, more especially, with a species of mechanical prowess, surpassing even the ingenuity of Archimedes, soon reared and planted on the ramparts of the battered fortress, a metaphysical engine endued with astonishing powers. For such was its construction, through means of principles taken for granted, that the self activity of spirit became reduced to the

passiveness of a beam and scales moved by weights, and so thorougly imbued was its essence with this principle of materiality, that whosoever attempted to ply it was himself speedily transformed into a mere mental machine; and, as if by magnetick attraction, became instantly suspended on the beam dangling up and down, as the preponderating weights were shifted to either scale. This great machine, thus plied, effused on all who assailed it such overwhelming mists and fogs of fallacious distinction, bewildering definition, sophistical inference, and irksome tautology, that but few were able to discover or approach its vulnerable parts of *necessarian liberty*, *mechanism* of *mind*, and preposterous *natural ability*, begetting on the *will* a *mulish progeny* of *moral* volitions.

BELLAMY, encouraged by this successful invention, and observing that the Calvinistick tenet of "*unconditional reprobating wrath*" was still hugely offensive to multitudes, who could no otherwise regard it, but as being *unqualified cruelty*, aided his ingenious friend in devising a mirror, which, by the power of reversing objects, could transform *cruelty* into *compassion*, *sin* into *divine glory*, and *absurdity* into plausible *argument*. This mirror was "*love of being in general*," set in a *frame gilded* with *disinterested love*. And such were the effects of this surprising mirror, that thousands looking therein became instantly so enamoured with unconditional reprobating wrath, that losing the power of due and sober reflection, they quickly fancied themselves perfectly willing, in order to glorify God, to go to hell, and be eternally damned.

It was under the influence of these exquisite advantages to Calvinism, of this machinery and mirror, that HOPKINS arose into view. This singular reformer appears to have possessed a mind emulous of distinction, patient of fatigue, acute in discrimination, and daring in inference, but narrowed within the circumscribed limits of sectarianism. With these qualifications he boldly innovated on Calvinism, not to mutilate, but to amend, nor yet to subvert, but to establish it on an immovable foundation. Therefore, what to him appeared defensible, he retained; what he deemed untenable, he abandoned. Legitimate inferences, he admitted, avowed and vindicated; and, applying the Bellamite and Edwardean mirror, further embellished with a surprising glare of *benevolence*; assumption became tinged into argument, effrontery appeared modesty, deformity was sublimated into beauty, and finally, plying dexterously the Edwardean machinery, he, in concert with numerous disciples, actuated by *automaton* energy, boldly bade defiance to every arminian foe.

EMMONS, as his coadjutor and successor, appears now to *unfurl* the *banner*, and *direct* the *march* of *Necessarianism*. This distinguished gentleman, on stepping into the Hopkinsian Divinity Chair, vacated by the death of his renowned friend, found himself in possession of important advantages. The machinery and mirror were invented, improvements made on them, and besides, were extensively put into successful operation. The horrour, usually attendant on novel and impious absurdities, had generally abated.

For by that time, the ears of mankind were become gradually accustomed and familiarized to hear with patience the most offensive contradictions. Numerous disciples were found to embrace and vindicate them. The press groaned beneath the redundancy of their effusions. Numerous pulpits, on each Lord's day, zealously propagated the *new* divinity. Colleges adopted and sanctioned the philosophical theology of the rising sect—whilst this illumined subreformer was himself a host. Formed by nature for metaphysical disquisition, inducted into it from childhood, trained to it by education, and accustomed to it by habitual exercise; he, without scruple, and perhaps without due previous examination of *first principles*, commenced in that career, which loudly invited to future fame. If Edwards and Hopkins, were each, expert and subtle metaphysicians, yet neither possessed in any high degree, ease of diction, elegance of expression, or harmony of fascinating periods. These in the superlative, seem to have been reserved, to grace the productions of the philosophical divine of Franklin. But as it may be inexpedient to enlarge here on the performances of this popular teacher, sanctioned by so many churches, and resorted to by numerous ministerial candidates; I shall close these remarks by further observing, that ease and elegance of composition, acuteness of discrimination, perspicuity of expression, and boldness and fertility of inference, are but pitiful compensations to society, for the pestiferous principles diffused therein, and by these very means disseminated with the greater success. For what is Hopkin-

sianism, or Emmonism, but a system, which, under the pretence of refinement in reason, and in moral and religious sentiment, outrages them all? For by reducing all created existences into systems of mere passive machinery, if any guilt can be supposed possible to exist in such a creation, the whole mass thereof, must, by unavoidable implication, attach alone to that Being, who, according to Hopkinsianism, is the only self active agent throughout the whole universe.

Moral agency and its concomitants shall be considered in my next.

LETTER VIII.

SIR,

MORAL AGENCY, as involving the character of a person whose actions or volitions render him praise-worthy, or which deservedly subject him to blame or punishment, is a theme which demands our peculiar and special attention; because this is the very *pivot* on which our researches into Hopkinsianism, will, in a great degree, turn.

The metaphysician of Stockbridge was strangely misled when he defined moral agency to "consist in spontaneous, voluntary exertion."* And, also, when in the same page he repeats, "that spontaneous, vol-

* West's essay, page 17.

untary exertion, is such an agency as hath moral desert in it." This definition, if correct, would render every beast of the field, every bird of the air, every fish of the sea, and each and every insect and creeping thing, a moral agent deserving of reward or punishment; for every one of them performs "spontaneous, voluntary exertions." The qualifications constituting moral agency are not vague or indeterminate, although they differ in different *subjects*. God is a moral agent. Adam, in innocency, was a moral agent. He was one after his transgression. His posterity are moral agents, though impressed with marked variety of character. Moral agency in Deity, is always, like himself, immutable. In mankind, like themselves, tinged with variety of shades; and yet, in some respects, bears striking resemblance to that of God himself.

Edward remarks on some dissimilarities and on some resemblances.

DISSIMILARITIES.

"Here it may be noted that there is a *circumstan-*
"*tial difference* between the moral agency of a *ruler*
"and a subject. I call it circumstantial, because it
"lies only in the difference of moral inducements
"they are capable of being influenced by, arising from
"the difference of circumstances. A ruler, acting in
"that capacity only, is not capable of being influenced
"by the sanctions of a moral law, as the *subject* is.
"And therefore the moral agency of the Supreme Be-
"ing, who acts only in the capacity of a ruler towards
"his creatures, and never as a subject, differs in that

"respect from the moral agency of created intelligent "beings;" because, "by reason of his being supreme "over all, it is not possible HE should be under the "influence of law or command, promises or threaten- "ings, rewards or punishments, counsels or warn- "ings."* And besides this circumstantial difference, of being exalted above the inducements resulting from law; there is also a marked real one in this, that moral agency in God is *underived;* and is "the "source of *all ability* of *moral agency to man.*"

RESEMBLANCES.

"The *essential* qualities of a moral agent are in "God, in the greatest possible perfection; such as "understanding, to perceive the difference of moral "good and evil, a capacity of discerning of that moral "worthiness and demerit, by which some things are "praise-worthy, others deserving of blame and pun- "ishment; and also a capacity of choice, and choice "guided by understanding, and a power of acting ac- "cording to his choice or pleasure, and being capable "of doing those things which are in the highest sense "praise-worthy. And herein does very much consist "that *image* of God, wherein he made man (which "we read of Genesis 1, 26, 27, and IX, 6) by which "God *distinguished man* from the *beasts*, viz. in "those faculties and principles of nature, whereby he "is capable of moral agency. Herein very much

* Inquiry, pages 39, 40, Albany edition.

"consists the *natural* image of God; as his *spiritual* "and *moral* image, wherein man was made at first, "consisted in that moral excellency, that he was en- "dowed with."* Truly deserving of the strictest attention, is this definition of moral agency. It is indeed verbose, vague and tautological; but all these were necessary to the thing designed. It is explicit and obscure, deep, wary, artful, a very master piece, strikingly characteristick of the genius of its subtile author. In order duly to comprehend it, it is expedient to note and bear in remembrance, that the above definition of moral agency lays claim to its containing within itself, through the medium of the divine character, "the essential qualities of a moral agent in the greatest possible perfection." That it recognises and enumerates distinctly, several of those qualities essential to a moral agent. That one of the qualities deemed most essential to moral agency, is expressed in the obscure terms, of God's "being capable of doing those things, which are in the highest sense praiseworthy;" for neither these things themselves, nor yet, wherein consists the capacity of performing them, is in this definition expressed or intimated.

And lastly, that the foregoing Edwardean definition of moral agency, ascribes to man at his creation, a participation in the character of divine moral agency, whereby God distinguished him from the beasts; but this ascription of moral endowment and resemblance

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* Inquiry, page 40, 41.

in Adam to his Creator, is declared in such ambiguous terms, that it is difficult to comprehend what portion of moral faculties, whether the whole, a part, or what part of them, were in the confering of the divine image, impressed upon man. And by a sudden transition from the ideas of moral agency, to the idea of a "natural image of God," as distinct from the divine moral image, the reader becomes bewildered, and at a loss to comprehend what portion of moral faculties were lost at the fall, and whether mankind are now distinguishable from the beasts: For the above mentioned sudden transition, seems to have been made only for the purpose of wresting all claim to *moral ability* from the non-elect, leaving them, however, invested with such respective portions of *natural ability*, as should saddle *moral condemnation* on the shoulders of these wretched elves.

But in order to scrutinize more narrowly this mysterious wheel of the complex engine, we should, laying aside all metaphor, trace with circumspection the essential qualities of moral agency, as distinctly enumerated by Edwards himself, and which deducting tautology and verbosity, consists, first, "in a capacity so to understand between moral good and evil, as to be able to discern betwixt that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praise-worthy, and others deserving of blame and punishment." Secondly, "in a capacity of choice guided by understanding." And thirdly, "In a power of acting according to choice." These three particulars, according to the above definition, contain the sum total of qualifications

essential to human moral agency. And to render them the more important and acceptable, they are declared to exist also in the Deity.—And to add yet more to their weight, no other essential qualification of moral agency is explicitly ascribed to God himself. A circumstantial difference of agency betwixt *ruler* and subject is indeed expressly noted, and the difference betwixt self existent and an imparted power of agency were remarked, and something else was hinted at of Deity "doing those things which in the *highest sense* are praise-worthy." And with these exceptions, all the other qualifications were, he admits, confered on man. But for what, is all this studied precaution, this circumlocution, this veil of mystery? If to prevent mistake and errour, it is deserving of high praise: but if to entrap, if to deceive his readers by withholding from their inquiring minds, the knowledge and belief of some *one* quality essential in the very highest degree to moral agency, it must cause regret, that talents so rare and exquisite were thus unhappily enlisted on the side of errour. But of this no doubt can remain; for on the list of qualities essential to moral agency, no mention whatsoever is made of the moral agent being endued with such a capacity as invests him "*power over his own will.*" Had this quality of self government in volitions, or in exertions of the will been omitted in this definition, it would have mutilated the character of divine moral agency; and had it been plainly expressed, it might have frustrated his deep design; he therefore was induced to exhibit it under the disguise of the mysterious expressions,

"Being capable of doing those things which are in the *highest sense* praise-worthy;" for he well knew that where this power of self government never existed, "things in the *highest sense praise-worthy*," or in the "*highest sense blameable*," could never be performed. For proof that the non-existence of this self governing power in an agent, however otherwise morally endowed, would in the "highest sense," divest his action of praise or blame, you have only to suppose this principle of self government of will deducted from the moral capacity of the deity. Imagine it possible for some *exteriour controling* power to fetter the mind of Deity, leaving Him still in possession of his own infinite understanding and knowledge; but the government of his will is arrested, he has indeed the capacity of choice when excited by the external agent, and ability of refusal when moved thereto by the external controling power. Now if under these circumstances, good were to be chosen, or good refused, to whom would praise or blame attach in the "highest sense?" To the infinitely blessed Being bound? or to the controling power acting as if invested with, but betraying sovereign guardianship? But as the worthy President Edwards did not design to mutilate or limit the divine character, his premeditated purpose was only benevolently to reconcile his readers to the scanty pittance of moral agency, which he was allotting for their respective portions. And as the best means to effect this salutary purpose, he deemed it advisable to conceal under the disguise before mentioned this principle of self control in moral agency,

that when exhibiting Adam in *an* image of his Creator, it should not be in his real *free* image, but in such as would imply destitution of "power over one's own will." Nor can any expedient be conceived, of more adroitness than this. Adam, in respect to moral agency, was very much created in the image of God himself; but in this moral agency and image no "self government of the will" appears. Nothing is, therefore, more preposterous than for any of Adam's posterity to claim a power over their wills which even Adam never possessed, although formed so much in his Creator's image. Such, sir, was the train of false reasoning, plausibly conclusive, induced by this sophistical artifice. Ability of choice, not investing the person choosing with the government of his own will, but ever subjecting all his volitions to the irresistible influence or will of an external agent wholly distinct from himself, is *all* the ability of choice confered by Edwards on his created moral agent. Such an agent to amuse him may be called *moral*, and such agency to flatter him, be denominated *freedom;* but the amusement and flattery, are but *insult* and *mockery;* for no condition of rational existence can be conceived of, *less* capacitated for moral character, or *more* completely sunk into the most abject bondage of willing slavery to domination.

Though concise yet far preferable is Barruel's definition of liberty and moral agency to that of Edwards. "Liberty consists not in the power of doing what we "will, but in the *power* to *will*, or to *forbear* to *will*. "Suppose three men; the first is capable of commit-

"ting a bad action, but forbears. The second is ca-
"pable of committing, or of forbearing, but he com-
"mits it. The third is capable of willing it, but *not*
"of refusing it, and does it. Now the first is a *good*
"man. The second is a *bad* man; and the third a
"*poor miserable machine*, unless his *abuse* of self
"power hath reduced him to this condition."

In order to do justice to this ingenious writer and to his very judicious observations, we should here remark, that he places that which constitutes the freedom of moral agency not in the will itself, nor yet in ability to will; but in the agent's "having *power* to *will* or to *forbear* willing;" that is, in *ability* to exercise, or forbear exercising volition, uncontroled by exteriour agency or influence. But whatever excellencies may be discovered in either, or in both of the forementioned theories of moral agency, it becomes us not to forget the more sure word of prophecy; but from these inestimable treasuries of divine instruction, diligently to furnish our inquiring minds with such further information as the state of the question, "*darkened* by words without knowledge," may require. In recurring to this sacred volume we perceive therein a principle of moral agency, which lays open before us the human heart, and which, instead of discovering moral *inability engraven thereon*, exhibits in legible characters the hallowed precepts of the divine law inscribed thereon by the hand of God. Romans 11, 14, 15. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do
"by nature the things contained in the law, these hav-
"ing not the law, are a law unto themselves. Which

"shew the work of the law *written* in their *hearts*; "their *conscience* also bearing witness, and their "thoughts meanwhile accusing, or else excusing one "another." "Thus, in the compass of two verses, "the apostle hath explained what the *light of nature* "*is*, and demonstrated that there is such a light exist- "ing. It is *a revelation from God*, written on the "*heart* or *mind* of man; and, consequently, is a reve- "lation common to all nations; and so far as it goes, "it agrees with the things written in the external rev- "elation; for the mind of *man*, as made by God, "*harmonizes* with the *mind* of *God*." (Macknight.) In whatever degree it is to be regretted, still, it is not at all surprising that the author of the Inquiry did not more explicitly incorporate the *powers* of *conscience* amongst his defined qualities of a moral agent; for if he discovered in the foregoing formidable scripture, Macknight's inference therefrom, viz. "that the *mind* of *man*, as *made* by God, *harmonizes* with the *mind* of *God*," he must have *shrunk* from it, as being hostile to his favourite "*moral inability*," and as utterly subversive of his *idol* "*total depravity*," from the womb.

To sum up the whole, moral agency, therefore, appertaining to *man* as taught by reason, but as rectified and improved by apostolical wisdom divinely inspired, involves therein, first; a divine revelation, containing the supreme law of moral obligation. Secondly; ability of understanding to perceive, and of *conscience* to *feel* the *force* of such obligation. Thirdly; a capacity of choice *guided* by understanding, and *admon-*

ished by *conscience*. And lastly, such *investiture* of ability of choice, in volitions *morally free*, as precludes all influence of *external necessitating* control, over the moral agent; unless such *investiture* of ability, as well as other moral faculties, become *forfeited* by his *own personal* misconduct, in his *self abuse* thereof. A person endowed as above, and such a person only can, according to reason and scripture, be truly considered as *invested* with *moral character*, and as *subjected* to *moral accountability*.

Freedom of volition will be vindicated in my next.

LETTER IX.

SIR,

ALTHOUGH all parties acknowledge freedom of will to be in some sense essential to moral agency, and to its concomitant accountability; yet, but few agree, either as to the nature, or extent of this freedom.

Calvinists, properly so called, allow it to have been in its true sense possessed by our first parents, while innocent. But, by subjecting their wills to the influence of a *decree* which necessitated their fall, Calvinism hereby contradicts itself, and renders such transitory freedom of no kind of importance; because, when most needed, it was suppressed by the giver of it. And hence it follows on this scheme, that Adam and Eve, although truly free for a short season, yet, were

not free when assailed by temptation, because the power of resistance was then withdrawn from them. So that their fall arose not from abuse of free will, but from a decreed privation of it. Calvinism, therefore, by ascribing free will to Adam in order to make his disobedience sinful, is wholly inconsistent with its own pninciples; because Adam's freedom of will prior to temptation, had no connexion with his necessity of will when subjected to temptation. And hence it follows, that all Calvinistick imputation of Adam's guilt from his supposed free act of sin, to all his necessitated posterity, is but a mere nullity. Because Adam in sinning under the *secret, hidden influence* of a divine necessitating decree, was in reality no more *free*, than any of his posterity.

Hopkinsianism, although no less at variance with truth and reality than Calvinism, yet is far more consistent with itself. For as *necessity* is its pole star, it therefore allows as much *freedom* to each individual of Adam's posterity, throughout all their existence, whether on earth, in heaven, or in hell, as it does to Adam, or Eve, at any moment of their lives. Their definition of freedom is, that a man *is truly free, when he can do as he pleases.* But this freedom is invariably, but necessity. Because the Hopkinsian freeman, may choose, but cannot refuse; or may refuse, but cannot choose: the government of his will, choice, or refusal, not being in the man himself, but in another being, who invariably makes the man machine choose, refuse, or will, as the great contriver himself pleases.

The advocates for genuine, rational, and real free will, have not always defined it either with due correctness, or with judicious uniformity. Some have defined human freedom of will, to consist in a self determining power in the will itself over its own acts. But this is an absurdity, because the will is not a being, but a faculty of a being. Others have denominated it *indifference* or *equilibrium* of *will.* While some others have defined it to consist in *contingency* of *volitions* and *events.* The discerning Dr. Dana in defining it, asserts, that "Moral agents are themselves the *efficients* of their own volitions." Nor can a better definition be easily offered. For the sake however of greater precision, and perspicuity, it may be expedient to remark here, the distinction betwixt will and volition. That the former is a *faculty* of the human soul; and the latter an *act* of the soul through the medium of this its *faculty* of will. And, therefore, when the will is said to act, no more can correctly be implied thereby, than the soul's own action, through the will as a medium of volition. And in this view, of this subject, the soul is the agent, the will the instrument of action, and the volition, or what is the same thing, the choice or the refusal is the act. And this agent is truly free, when under no other necessity but such as results from law, or duty; he is then capable in the view of motives to act, or forbear to act, to choose, or to refuse, or to do neither. In such case, if he exerts a volition, he is himself the efficient of such volition. But if Deity controls his will, so as necessarily to cause the volition, or to cause it to be

one way rather than another, the man is no longer free, nor accountable; but is under a *natural* necessity of action. And this the Deity sometimes performs, even "When he turns the kings heart as the rivers of water are turned." Were these distinctions but duly attended to, much confusion of ideas, and errours in argument, would be avoided; but Hopkinsianism would then lose one of its strongest holds, for its greatest strength lies as before observed, and as will hereafter further appear, in excluding light, and, in spreading clouds and darkness over the subject.

West, in the appendix to his Essay, when combating Dana's judicious assertion, that "Moral agents are themselves the efficients of their own volitions," thus declaims, "The doctrine of a power of self-de-"termination; or of a power in men to produce and "effect their own acts of will is every way embarrass-"ed. In getting rid of one difficulty, we run directly "upon another; difficulties on every side incumber "it."* If this writer meant, that these difficulties were of such a nature as greatly to have embarrassed himself and his scheme, he would have made an honest confession: but as he designed them to operate on the other side, and in his own favour: he deserves the high credit of discovering, or, of *affecting* to have discovered great difficulties, where none at all existed. But he proceeds, "The *reasonings* against the exist-"ence and possibility of such a power (of men being "the efficients of their own volitions) merit an answer

* Page 7.

"if capable of it:—Without confuting them, no man "ought to imagine he can write successfully in vindi- "cation of such a power."* And having previously to this, closed his arguments on the same topic of necessity against freedom, he then concluded. "Hav- "ing thus *proved*, as I apprehend, the perfect incon- "sistency of the notion of a power of self determina- "tion in men: the consequence clearly is, that *all the* "*exercises* of *human volition arise wholly* from some "*extrinsick cause.*"† Surely, sir, if not instantly petrified into motionless statues, by this most alarming conclusion of so potent a reasoner, we ought, without delay, to attempt at least one effort of volition and argument, to break these menacles of this reasoning; lest by being enchained down thereby, we should actually become reduced to the abject condition, of souls materialized into machinery, needing continually an external impetus, to effect our every motion both of soul, and body. But happily for us, this mighty reasoner, and the still more mighty Edwards, have directed their resistless force of argument, not against "ability in men themselves to originate their own acts of will," but against the false notion of its residing in the will itself. And of its existing in contingency, in equilibrium, &c. &c.

Against these erroneous definitions of the power in question, they waged mighty warfare, and over them obtained many a victory; but against the power itself truly defined they have not obtained the like success.

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* Page 7. † Essay, page 128.

Against this they have marshalled arguments from the supposed Divine decree, fore-ordaining whatsoever comes to pass, (which will hereafter be duly noticed, when the divine decrees shall specially be considered.) But as to their remaining efforts of argument, they are pitiful indeed; being made up for the most part of *quibbles*, *begging the question*, and *evasions*. And this they were driven to, not because, that as writers, they were deficient in talents, but because their subject was a bad one, and incapable of any better defence.

West, in section VI, part I, of his Essay, combating an anonymous writer, observes, "It hence appears, that the power which our author insists on, "as essential to moral liberty, is a capacity, or faculty "with which moral agents are *endowed*, of originating "their own voluntary exertions; even so that nothing "but what is in the man, and what *properly belongeth* "to him, can justly be considered as the cause of his "volitions. Accordingly, he urgeth, that, we must "be the *causes* of our own volitions."* "Moral ac- "tion, therefore, upon these principles, is something "of which there is no cause, reason or ground of its "existence. For whatsoever exists, must have come "into being, either out of nothing absolutely without "cause, or it must have been produced by some ex- "ternal cause: or it must be self existent. The *two* "last of which, will not either of them be pretended "of creatures."† In this attempt at refutation, two

* Page 106. † Pages 106, 107.

manifest blunders occur, which indicate great confusion of ideas in the mind of the objector. The latter mistake is indeed harmless, and consists in the substitution of "two last," for "the first and the last." For all will own, that "all creatures have an *external* cause:" but no *creature* will pretend he has come into being "uncaused" "out of nothing." But the former errour is of quite another description, and exists in the affirmation, that "moral action, upon" the before defined "principles, is something of which there is no *cause*, *reason* or *ground* of its existence." It is truly strange that Dr. West should thus so soon have forgotten what he had just before acknowledged, viz. that his opponent "urged that we must be the causes of our own volitions." So far then on these principles is moral action from being something of which there is *no cause*, *reason* or *ground* of its existence, that its only true and proper cause is most expressly assigned, viz. the moral agent himself, as being the real efficient of his own volitions and actions. As it is scarcely credible that the doctor was thus so exceedingly forgetful, some other cause of errour may unhappily have misled him. Nor is this difficult to be conceived of. For such were his impressions and ideas of the *inertness mechanism* and *impotence* of human souls that he must have imagined *stocks*, *stones* and *dry bones* were as capable of effecting volitions and actions, as living men were; and, consequently, that such assigned causes of volition and action, were no causes deserving of any notice whatsoever.

But he proceeds, "Whosoever speaketh of a self "originating motion in the mind of man, or of any "exercise of will begun by *itself*, conveys no manner "of idea beyond that of the bare exercise of volition; "the very idea of a power of self motion, self deter- "mination, in various ways destroying itself, and its "own existence, and entirely shutting itself out of the "world."* Whilst we have in this quotation and example of this writer's excluding good sense out of his composition, we have also a specimen of his dexterity in evading difficulties; for hard pressed by the correct idea of a moral agent effecting and producing his own volitions and actions, he artfully endeavours to transfer the idea of agency from the man himself to his volitions and his actions; as if it were not the man that exercised his own will, but the will that exercised itself; and as if action was not produced by human beings, but was its own production; and this pitiful game of contending only with shadows and phantoms, he thus frequently plays off upon his readers: "Thus "doth it appear that the idea of self motion, self de- "termination; *that is*, a motion originated by *itself*, "and by its own *casual* influence brought into exist- "ence, is in itself, as evidently and clearly a contra- "diction, as that two and two should make five."† But in all this rant of sophistical farce he was only a mere copist. For he evidently had learned it from the greater Edwards, who, before him, had condescended to this despicable artifice. For in replying to

* Pages 121, 122. † Ibid, page 124.

an opponent he says, "Let the objector reflect again "if he has *candour* and *patience* enough, and does not "*scorn* to be at the trouble of close attention in this "affair. He would have a man's volition be *from* "*himself*. Let it be *from himself*, most primarily "and originally of any way conceivable, that is, from "*his own choice*. How will this help the matter?"† President Edwards appears in this instance to great disadvantage. For he most grossly insulted his opponent by endeavouring to palm on his understanding the idea of his "own choice" instead of the idea of "*himself*."* But whilst he thus discovered so great a destitution of *candour* in himself, he had the goodness to recommend both it, and a large stock of patience, to the man upon whom he meant to impose. But arming *ourselves*, not *our choice*, with the patience recommended, we will not "*scorn*" to be at the trouble "of close attention" to his further observations on *this affair*, viz. "How will that help the

† Inquiry, page 365.

* It is scarcely possible to find stronger presumptive evidence of the fallacy of any doctrine, than to discover its ablest advocates resorting to unfair means for its support. No man, perhaps, ever studied more intensely into the operations of the human will, than President Edwards. Nor was he inferiour to any in ability for an attempt of that nature. When, therefore, on this, his favourite point, argument and candid definition fail him, and evasion and shuffling become the weapons of his warfare, as in the above instances, we are constrained to regret a perversion of such talents, in defence of doctrines incapable of vindication.

matter? unless that choice itself be blame or praise-worthy."§

This is but an evasion, to divert the mind from that close attention to which invited, and which is highly necessary, in respect to the main question. We will however follow him, and again return. The new idea here started, shifts the debate from proof of the origin of volition, to the quality of volition. This he had before thus debated; (verbosity, however, omitted.) "One main foundation of the reasons brought to es-"tablish the forementioned notions of liberty, virtue, "vice, &c. is a supposition that the virtuousness of "the acts of the will consists not in the nature, but "wholly in the cause of them, so that if the acts of the "will be never so good, yet, if the cause of the act "be not *our* virtue, there is nothing virtuous in it; "and, on the contrary, if the will in its acts be never "so bad, yet, unless *it arises from something that is* "*our vice, or fault*, there is nothing vicious in it."* To this he replies, "If the essence of virtuousness "and viciousness does not lie in the *nature* of the acts "of mind, said to be *our* virtue or *our* fault, *but* in "their *cause*, then it is certain it lies no where at all. "For if the vice of a vicious act of will, lies not in "the nature of the act, but the *cause*, so that its being "of a bad nature will not make it *our* fault, unless it "arises from some faulty determination of *ours*, as its "*cause;* then, for the same reason, neither can the "viciousness of that cause lie in the nature of the

§ Inquiry, page 365. * Inquiry, page 249.

"thing itself, but in its *cause*. And when we are "come to this higher *cause*, still the reason of the "thing holds good, &c. &c. And thus we must "drive faultiness back from step to step in infinitum; "that is, to allow it no possibility of existence any "where in the universality of things."* This mighty fabrick of ingenuity and demonstration is truly but a *paltry affair;* for even should any have been so weak, as to have supposed no evil in the nature of a vicious act, nor praise in that of a good one; yet, who so simple as to be persuaded by any thing in the foregoing arguments, that the praise of good, and blame of bad acts, do not revert back to, and devolve wholly upon their true and real authors wherever found. It is President Edwards himself who banishes the blame of bad, and the praise of good volitions out of the universe; by so attaching the vice and virtue of volitions to their own natures, and by so detaching the praise and blame from their authors. On this ground, vice or virtue can never be rewarded; for who can arrest the fugitive volition, to honour, or to afflict it? And if the volition cannot be rewarded or punished, so neither can the essence or nature of it. The blame and praise should, therefore, be so distributed betwixt *author*, *act* and *essence*, as that the weight of the two latter should revert back on the former. But the poor man machine, who performed these things not through any "*fault* or *virtue* of *his*," but merely through *necessity; reason*, *common sense* and *impartial justice*, *all pronounce*, Let him go free.

* Inquiry, page 250.

We now *return* to the *origin* of *volition.* On this point he seems thus to reason: "Volition, to be from "himself, must be from his own choice; and that "choice, from a former choice; and so on to infinity, "which is a contradiction." But he is here neither distinct nor full. West, seems, however, to have taken the hint of this argument, and to have managed it better; we therefore will follow his track of argument. "If moral volitions proceed from a *cause* in the a- "gents themselves, this cause must be *voluntary*, oth- "erwise it could not *effect* the acts of will. And if it "be a voluntary cause, it differs not from an act of the "will; and, therefore, men are the efficients of their "acts of will, by acts of will. But, which, as they "could not have been by an eternal series, is ab- "surd."* Here we discover betwixt both these writers, an agreement as to the absurdity of one volition originating from another; but West is most explicit, in denying volitions to arise from an involuntary cause, that is, as he understands, from any thing which is not a volition. The absurdity of one volition producing another volition, belongs not to this question. A moral agent wills voluntarily, without a foregoing volition, or any such previous train. The fallacy of the objection, lies in confounding together, as if synonymous, the terms *voluntary cause* and *volition.*

The *cause* or *authority* which originates a *law*, is not itself a law, nor does it enact a law by a previous

* West's Appendix, page 5.

one, or by a foregoing train of laws. It is a collective legislative agent, constitutionally capacitated, whether representative or incorporate, within prescribed limits; to exercise a *self* determining power *over* its *own* acts, and of which, it is *itself* the efficient. And so striking an image is this of a moral agent, exercising a dependent and limited authority over his own self governed volitions, and of which, he is himself the efficient, that it needs only to be mentioned to carry with it conviction.

But here a formidable objection rears its terrifick front. "Such a *(self)* exertion as this must imply "some faculty, or power in human nature, which has "never yet been discovered; but hath hitherto escaped the notice and observation of the most subtile "and critical inquirer. It is not the faculty of understanding; for with the dictates of this faculty, it is "acknowledged the choice of the mind is in no degree connected; being oft in opposition to them. "And, that, *surely* cannot be the *cause* of an event, "the whole influence of which is utterly resisted by "the event. And what powers there are in human "nature, for any to exert, *besides those* of *understanding* and *will*, we must wait to be informed by such "as urge, that all the acts of our wills, are the effects "of our own exertions."*

"If the power which mankind are supposed to have "over their own wills, hath no degree of choice in it, "it may as well be *external*, as *internal*, as to any

* Essay, page 120.

"improvement it makes in liberty: (for) that must "surely be a very impotent sort of power, which, in "its utmost exertion, will never produce the least de- "gree of volition. And be to as little purpose as a "poor beggar covered with rags, who exerts his sove- "reign authority over realms, which his disordered "brain hath made him imagine are subject to his sole "command and arbitrary will."*

Of what species a moral agent can be, who is possessed only of understanding and will, and as unable to exercise a single volition by any power in himself, as the lunatick beggar is to rule over his fancied realms; seems difficult to determine. It is however clear, that this impotent agent cannot be of human kind; for Locke, Watts, and thousands, besides these discerning scrutinizers of Adam's race, have discovered in *real* men, perception, reason, conscience, kind natural affections towards kindred and friends, and the powerful stimulating passions of anger, hope, fear, &c. But this paltry wight in human form, seems only a skeleton of man, dissected, mutilated, steeped in metaphysical brine, strung on metaphysical wires, and made to dance such capers as would best suit the taste of West and Edwards.

To this it is gravely replied, that nothing "can be "more unreasonable, than to consider voluntary de- "signing agents mere machines.† Nor, that any use "can be made (of this comparison) except in excla- "mation and popular harangues, and in applications,

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* West's Essay, page 131. † Ibid, page 132.

"*not* to reason, but to the imaginations of men."† Let us, then, soberly hear his definition of a mere machine. "Whatever motion we behold to be utterly "involuntary and undesigning, we consider as *altogether mechanical.* Thus we term the motions of the "earth, and other bodies composing the material system, *mechanical.* And after the same manner, the "ascending of vapours, the blowing of the winds, the "motions of clocks and watches, &c. These effects "we never consider as the fruit of any voluntary intention in the bodies themselves, but the changes in "them we consider as the mere effects of some external influence and force. These, it appears to me, "are the ideas which men generally have of mechanical motions."§ This definition is manifestly defective; mechanical motion, although never implying *internal design*, yet ever invariably pre-supposes *external design.* The precise difference, then, betwixt a watch or clock, and a moral agent, according to West, in respect to *liberty*, is precisely this; that the *one* is *capable* of *perceiving* and *willing* his own motions, under the *same kind* of *external influence*, that the other, *without* perceiving or willing, is rendered capable of performing *its own motions;* for it is idle to pretend any due influence of moral motives, on mind, separated from conscience, passions and affections. But there is another implied difference, viz. in respect to essence. The clock and watch are not merely destitute of cogitation, but are also wholly destitute of all

† Page 133. § Pages 131, 132.

spirituality; they are mere material machines. Whilst real men rank in the class of spiritual existences, not subject to those principles of decomposition to which mere material existences are liable. And this leads to a very important discovery, as it shews us the links by which *men* and *machines* may become united. Priestley's materialized, cogitating machinery of man, is the *link* in the chain of existences, that approximates matter, nearest to spirit. And the degraded moral agents of West and Edwards, constitute the *descending link* of Spirit, as approximating towards materialism. But as I am unable to discern whether they come into real contact or not, I beg, sir, you will please so to *contrast them* as fully to make the discovery.

In my next it is proposed to notice some other absurdities of the new divinity.

LETTER X.

SIR,

AMONGST first principles, which are self evident in their own *natures*, none ranks higher than this leading truth, viz. that ability, as refering to action, must, in respect to *degree*, invariably be adequate to the difficulty of the action produced; and in respect to *nature*, that *ability* and *action* are ever of the same kind with each other. For this principle, besides its

own internal evidence, is supported by the universal experience of *all men* in *all ages*.

It is, sir, in conformity with this principle, that you have judiciously observed, that "*ability* must not only *relate* to the action, but be *adapted* to it: For the "trunk of a tree, its bark and buds, may have some "relation to pears; but no one would say, that the "trunk, bark and buds of the oak, constituted a capacity for bearing pears or peaches. *Moral* fruits, as well "as *natural*, require an *appropriate* capacity. *Intellectual* action, requires *intellectual* ability: *Mechanical* "action, mechanical ability: *Muscular* action, *muscular* ability; and *moral action*, *moral ability*." This formidable reasoning you opposed, to the Hopkinsian absurdity, that *natural ability alone*, is sufficient to constitute a man an agent, *morally* accountable for his conduct. Nor can I forbear transcribing your further appropriate expression of abhorrence of this contradictory tenet. "To *love* God, you say, is a *moral* action; and men are bound to love God, because they "have ability to *think* and to *walk*, while they *have* "*not ability to love*. Is this logick? Is this the way "to silence cavillers, and justify the impeached rectitude of Jehovah, in requiring fallen man to be holy?" (Ely.)

But principles, however important in their effects on society, however self-evident from their own nature, or however firmly established by the uniform experience and common sense of mankind; self-sufficient theorists have attempted, by sophistical artifice, to obliterate from the minds of men. A Hume and

a Berkley, have, in the crucible of their own imaginations, dissipated all matter by evaporation, into a universe of ideal existences. Whilst Priestly, and other redoubtable philosophers, have so *decomposed* souls, as to materialize their essence into dissipated atoms. But not content with the destruction of both soul and body, another race of *wise* men have commenced a formidable attack upon the essential principles of *right reason* and *morality;* not by an *annihilation* of their *essence*, but by a *decomposition* of their *relation* and *order*. In consequence of which revolution in *divinity*, evil has become good; wrong has become right; and the most detestable *impurities* flow *directly* from the *purest fountain*. This revolution is, indeed, so great, that in theological discourses of the modern school, the meaning of some important expressions is so changed, that the alteration operates on religious sentiment, as base coin amongst a circulating medium. This change is to right reason, what false dice are to the gambler; and it affects truth and veracity, as false weights and measures do him who buys or sells. In a word, its tendency *is*, having first impaired the authority of the Holy Scriptutes, next impeached the character of the ever blessed God, to terminate its *final issue* in *Atheism itself.*

Amongst the minor artifices of deception practised on themselves and on others by these gentlemen, is that of a dexterous change of terms; and on which you have thus very handsomely animadverted, viz. "What have *intellectual* and *bodily strength* to do "with *moral actions?* There is something illogical in

"your *sweeping* the *cords* back and forth, from *natu-*
"*ral ability*, to *moral action*, and from *moral ability*,
"to *natural action;* you may thus charm with the
"musick of words, but will not convince the man of
"sound mind." (Ely.) Of this description are also the following quibbles of West: "No sentiment can "be more absurd than that which implies the *cause* of "sin to be itself sinful." "If sin hath a cause, it "must *necessarily* be a cause that is *sinless.*" "If "sin arise from a cause out of itself, it is absurd to "suppose the cause to be sin or sinful; cause and ef-"fect are two distinct things." They are distinct as to person, but alike in nature. For as an individual produces another individual of the same species; so a cause produces an effect of a like nature. They are indeed, *two* distinct things, but possessed of identity of essence. And akin to this fallacy thus detected, is his observation, "We may as well say, that the sour-"ness of grapes consisteth in the vine that bore them, "as that the evil of sin lieth in its cause." What! did this man never read, nor reflect, that if "Their grapes are grapes of *gall*, and their clusters *bitter*," it is because "their *vine* is the *vine* of *sodom*, and of the fields of Gomorrah?" Deut. xxxii, 32.

But bidding adieu for the present to the crudities, sophistry, and fallacies of the remote founders of the new divinity, we will notice the novel system in its more improved state; and for the sake of brevity, passing over the voluminous pages of the renowned Hopkins, we will seek that system which bears his name, in the writings of that author whose publications seem

now to be generally considered oracular by Hopkinsians.

Gratifying, indeed, would it be, if, in resorting to the lucubrations of this famed author, we could discover in his works, a detection of the errours of his predecessors and coadjutors, if we could trace therein only sound reasonings from correct principles, and if full evidence could appear, that "he still taught the "people knowledge, set in order many proverbs, gave "good heed to find out acceptable words, and that "(what by him) was written was upright, even "words of truth." (Solomon.)

But we will not condemn him unheard. In his sermon on Eccles. VII, 29; treating upon freedom of will and moral agency, he thus writes: "The excel- "lency of virtue or holiness consists not in its cause, "but in its nature. For if there cannot be a volition, "before the first volition, then the first volition of ev- "ery created agent must have a *cause altogether in-* "*voluntary*. This must have been the case with res- "pect to Adam. His first volition could not have "proceeded from a *previous* volition, and therefore his "first volition proceeded from some involuntary cause. "And if it proceeded from some involuntary cause, it "matters not whether that cause was within or with- "out him."

It is, indeed, difficult to conceive of the construction of any paragraph, on any subject, in so few words, which shall have so great appearance of so much correct reasoning, interwoven with so *many fallacies*, as are discoverable in the above quotation. For notwith-

standing all its plausibility of expression, and formality of argumentation, we recognize therein the stale artifice and quibbles of West and Edwards, heretofore animadverted upon. First. We discover the attempt to dissever the immutable relation which ever subsists betwixt *moral causes* and their effects.* Which insidious artifice of disseveration, where undetected, outrages the true dictates of right reason. For whilst the sober sense of mankind perceives and acknowledges, that praise or blame attach to good or evil volitions or actions; so they know that the actions in themselves, are incapable of being rewarded or punished, and therefore they inquire after the author or authors. If the actor is found to be the *author*, the whole praise or blame, as to reward or punishment, concentrates wholly in him: But if it is discovered that another had *excited* him, more especially had *necessitated* him to such action, then would such praise or blame principally, and if the necessity were absolute, *altogether devolve* upon the *first cause*, or *prime author*.

Secondly. We remark a quibbling on the term *involuntary*, thereby endeavouring to render the terms volition and voluntary cause, synonymous; so that

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* Hopkinsianism having discovered, that a *good* tree can bring forth *evil* fruit, and yet remain *good:* and an evil tree bring forth good fruit, and yet continue *evil:* and also, that a *fig-tree* can bear *olive berries*, and a *vine* figs; their scheme seems in some degree entitled to its high title of New Divinity; for it exhibits a new system of moral causes, and effects, which neither Christ, nor his Apostles, ever understood.

unless a volition was produced by a previous volition, it must of necessity arise from an involuntary cause; but as it hath been already made manifest, that volition and voluntary cause are wholly dissimilar, (the latter consisting *not* in *acts* of *will*, *but* in *ability to will uncontroled by any other being* than the agent himself) I shall not here repeat what was there observed. And thirdly. We discover how grovling are all his ideas of the *freedom* of volition, by his remark from his own mistaken conceptions of voluntary and involuntary. "And if it proceeded from an *involuntary* cause, it matters not whether that cause was *within* or *without himself.*" That is, if Adam's acts of will did not spring from *previous* acts of will, they must have sprung from an *involuntary* cause; and if so, no matter whether this cause was within or without himself. It is sometimes remarked, that when great men mistake, they mistake *greatly*. If this rule will hold good in all cases, then we must have an exalted opinion of our author's talents, for his mistake is great indeed. What! of no consequence to Adam! whether the perception and reason, the powers of conscience, the hope and fear, the love or hatred, or the cravings of bodily appetites, which stimulated him to *will* and *act*, were those, that were within himself, and under his own control; or were those that dwelt in some other person, who held him in willing bondage, and controled his every action of *soul* and *body*. To this, the doctor gravely replies. As "*mind* cannot *act* "any more than matter can *move*, without a divine "agency, it is absurd to suppose, that men can be left

"to the freedom of their own will, to act, or not to "act, independently of divine influence."* "And it "is equally certain, that Adam could not be the effi- "cient cause of his own volition. He was a depend- "ent creature. He lived, moved, and had his being "in God; and without him he could do nothing. "Such a *dependent* creature could no more produce "*his own volitions*, than *his own existence*. A self "determining power is an *independent* power, which "never was, and never could be given to Adam."† *Mind* and *matter* according to the doctor's definition, most strikingly resemble each other. Mind cannot act of itself, nor matter move itself. So impotent is mind, that it is as unable to exert of itself a single volition, as to give itself existence. Had Priestly but discovered such a *mind* in human form, he undoubtedly would have taken it for one of his materialized men. And, perhaps, have subjected it to the scrutinizing torture of a decomposition. This accommodation of the powers of mind, to the powers of matter, was designed as descriptive of Adam's ability *to will*, and *to do*. But Adam's ability to will and do, was not circumscribed within the narrow circle of mere mental ability. A mere thinking and perceiving being might not be able to do more than barely to perceive and think. But where are such beings to be found? Angels, whether good or evil, are not such; for they can both love and hate, as well as think.

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* Sermon on Genesis XLV, 5, page 41.

† Sermon on Ecclesiastes VII, 29, page 281.

Adam and all his rational posterity, possess *affections* as really as angels do. And Adam, and all his posterity, while inhabiting this world, were, or are endued with excitements to action, which no angel ever possessed. For the human soul being invested with a body composed of an organization transcending the deepest research, is thereby susceptible of pains and pleasures, and is endued with *appetites*, which none but incarnated spirits feel. And in addition to all this complicated stimulus to action, which neither angels, nor *matter* ever felt, we should annex the tender, melting, attractive and powerful excitements of natural affections, in all their complication of operations, on husband, wife, parent, child, and similar relative connexions. When, therefore, we contemplate a human being, as required to will, and to act, we do not consider his mentality as containing and furnishing all his ability for such action. We allow him indeed, his full portion of perception, viz. imagination, memory and reason; we annex to these, the faculty of conscience, as well as that of the will; and with these we combine the passions of love, hatred, hope, fear, &c. and from these we cannot separate either the appetites or the natural affections. And when we contrast such a being so endowed, with a parcel of mere matter, whether a stick, a stone, or a clod of earth, we cannot conceive how the great doctor Emmon's could have supposed that the former was no more capable of *acting*, without a divine agency, than the latter was of *moving*, without the like agency.

Common sense most certainly dictates, that an hungry, or a thirsty man, with food or drink within reach, needs no exciting divine impulse to induce him to satisfy the cravings of nature. And as common sense in these instances teaches, in direct contradiction to Hopkinsian sense, so it does likewise in all other cases in which the living soul is capable, through means of its mind and conscience, of its passions and affections, and of its appetites and propensions, to exert its will, by originating its own volitions, where suitable occasions offer. But to this it is objected, that, "a "self-determining power, is an independent power, "which never *was*, and never could be given to Adam, "who lived, moved, and had his being in God; and "without whom he could do nothing." And besides, "if it were possible, for moral agents to act, without "any divine influence upon their wills, it is easy to "perceive, that their actions would be *solely their* "*own:* and could not in any sense be ascribed to "God, nor considered as under his providential con-"trol."* Absurdity crowds here upon absurdity. For if man's self exertion in volition, thereby rendering his actions *solely* his own, and not God's actions, could spring only from an independent power, impossible to be communicated to any creature: then the same reasoning will, in like manner, apply to every thing else besides volition, which is solely a man's own act, and not God's. It will apply to his perceptions, his reasonings, his memory, his conscience, his affec-

* Page 41—Sermon on Genesis, XLV, 5.

tions and passions. Yea, and to his sensations of seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling and tasting. These cannot be *solely* a man's own; for if they were, they could not in any sense be ascribed to God. But would arise from an independent power impossible ever to be confered on any man. Therefore, all these belong to man only through a *divine influence*, which primarily makes them belong to God, more properly than to man. Therefore, it is God, who perceives for man, reasons for him, remembers for him, performs for him the office of conscience, loves, hates, hopes, fears, sees, hears, smells, tastes, and *wills* for him. In a word, man's soul and spirit, are so far *decomposed*, and their place so far supplied by such a portion of divine *actuation*, as causes all the perceptions, passions, affections, and actions of all men, to belong more properly to God than to themselves. But turning with indignation from this inevitable, disgusting, and apparently blasphemous result; permit me, sir, to solicit your attention to this subject in a less offensive point of view. A self determining power is deemed impossible to be communicated to creatures, because they "live, move, and have their being in God, and without him can do nothing." This reasoning we will test, by applying it to a case, at which already slightly hinted: viz. To the subsisting relation betwixt an incorporate society, and the legislature which confered thereon incorporate existence. The persons composing such society, although neither created nor upholden as men, by said legislature, yet so as respects *incorporate capacity*, and *continuance* therein, they are

as absolutely dependent on the legislature, as they are on God for their personal creation, and continuance in being as men. For, whilst in this *latter sense*, they "live, move, and have their being in God:" so in the *former sense*, *they live*, *move*, *and have their being*, only by the *power*, and within the *circle* and *extent* of the legislature's jurisdiction.

But this absolute dependence of incorporate capacity, does not disable them from exercising a *self determining power* over their own will, in enacting the laws of their society. Nor does this collective agent, in being thus the efficient of its own volitions, militate in any wise against either the honour or the authority of the supreme legislature. But on the contrary, its tendency is declaratively, to exalt, and magnify both; shining as the created image of that power, which invested it with ability to effect legislative volition, it glorifies the author of its incorporate being. The supreme legislature possesses within itself, all requisite ability for willing and enacting in its legislative character. The incorporated legislature is, by derivation, possessed of similar powers of action. But the former legislates throughout all its wide dominion, and upon all subjects suitable for legislation: whilst the latter, by the law of the former, is restricted within circumscribed limits. Nor can it without incurring the penalty of a forfeiture of chartered rights, violate the prescribed bounds, or intermeddle with forbidden objects.

Pursuing this analogy of reasoning, from man dependent upon man, to man dependent upon God, we

are constrained thence to infer, that as incorporated ability, though derived and dependent, is nevertheless capable of originating its own volitions, and of performing its own acts, without either infringing on the prerogatives, or requiring the exciting influence of the power whereby created and sustained; so, likewise, that man created in the image of the self determining Jehovah, and dependent on him, is nevertheless, rendered capable of originating his own volitions and actions, without either infringing on divine prerogatives, or being in all cases excited by divine influence to volition and action. And consequently, that as chartered societies perform actions which are wholly their own, and not the actions of the legislatures by whom created—so in like manner all men perform innumerable actions, which are wholly their own, and in no sense the actions of God.

Nor will it be insuperably formidable to object, that, for men to act independently of excitement from God, and independently of excitement from men, are things so entirely different in themselves, that whilst the latter may be possible, still the former must be wholly impossible, because in both cases, and in all others, God excites to every thing that is done, whether by men as individuals, or by them as composing, and constituting not merely the incorporate society, but even the supreme legislature itself. This objection is indeed specious, but not solid; because its foundation is sapped by its own fallacy; for its assertion of universal divine excitement causing all men to will and act, in all cases, is only begging the ques-

tion, and proves nothing. And this objection is still further inconclusive, because, although, it adverts to an undeniable difference betwixt incorporate volition, considered merely as *legal*, and volition *real* and *actual*, yet it wholly overlooks the respective sources from whence these different kinds of ability are derived, the one being *finite*, and the other *infinite:* so that the inference from analogy still remains unimpaired.

In this view of the subject, we behold the independent and self determining Jehovah, ruling a world, not of machines, but of men. We behold him as Lord supreme, stamping his own image of self determining power, upon the dependent creature, man. And in this we recognize man's awful responsibility. For hereby we behold him become the proper subject of divine law, and of its penalties. Nor is he unconditionally rendered independent of control by divine providence. For, at any moment, his liberty may be suspended, by the interposition of divine agency. But while so suspended, responsibility is also suspended. "The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whethersoever he will." (Proverbs xxi, 1.) As rivers of water are turned *not* by *moral*, *but* by *natural* influence, so the heart under such influence is no more accountable, than was the Euphrates when turned by the stratagem of the victorious Cyrus. But man, when enticed by his lusts, to yield himself up as a bond slave of satan, then judicially abandoned of God, his lost freedom will but ill excuse him; because he then only "Eats of the fruit of his own ways, and is filled with his

own devices." (Proverbs, 1, 31.) Having thus in the maintenance of human self ability of volition, endeavoured to vindicate divine creating power, against the imputation of impotency, to constitute other agency than that of *mental machinery*, I shall in my next, attempt to expose other errours no less pernicious and absurd.

LETTER XI.

SIR,

DOCTOR Emmons truly and justly observes, that "the only wise God can no more require us to *believe* that which is *absurd*, than he can *command* us to do that which *is sinful.*" Fully impressed with the self-evidence, and great importance of this proposition, as containing an interesting first principle of reason and knowledge, I cannot refrain from applying it to immediate use. And therefore am thus led to reason, viz. First. As God can no more require us to believe that which is absurd, than he can command us to do that which is sinful, therefore, He cannot require us to believe in Hopkinsianism, because it abounds in absurdities. And secondly. As God can no more command us to do that which is sinful, than he can require us to believe what is absurd; therefore, neither can he *cause* us to do that which is sinful: because for Deity to turn the corrupter of his

own creatures, and then to punish them for being so corrupt, is of all other absurdities the greatest: and if it were possible to be done, would be of all other sinfulness, the most sinful. But forbearing to press so disagreeable an application of the doctor's own discovered first principles; permit me, sir, to solicit your attention to his definition of *moral agency*, namely; "Were men destitute of conscience, they would be "equally incapable of feeling *moral* obligation, and of "distinguishing the moral quality of actions; neither "perception nor reason could give them this moral "discernment. It is *conscience* which *constitutes* "them moral agents, and *raises* them to the *rank* of "accountable beings." (Emmons.)

This definition of moral agency strikingly resembles the mutilated ones of West and Edwards, already noticed. For, like them, though designed for human kind, it excludes affections, passions, will, imagination, and animal appetites. And which, if actually rooted out of our nature, would render us as incapable of volition and action, as the inventers of the new divinity could wish or desire. But these three distinguished divines differed each from the other as to moral endowment. For West in his definition of it, wholly omitted *conscience*. Edwards, in a mysterious manner, seemed to hint at it, as somewhat necessary. But Emmons constitutes it the *all* in *all*. For he says, as above inserted, "It is *conscience* which *constitutes* moral agents, and *raises* them to the *rank* of accountable beings."

He allows, indeed, that *perception* and *reason* should have some place in moral agency; but, on his plan, so *little* of *either* is requisite, that new born infants are endowed with an *ample* portion of *both*, and likewise with a *sufficiency* of conscience to *raise* them to the *rank* of *accountable* beings. But his *own* words, will best express his *own* sentiments on this subject. "If conscience therefore be an essential faculty of the "human mind, it must belong to it in infancy. There "seems to be no way to avoid this conclusion, but to "suppose, that conscience cannot be exercised as ear-"ly as the other faculties of the mind. But how does "it appear that conscience cannot be exercised as ear-"ly as any other intellectual faculty? It does not ap-"pear from experience. For every person knows "that he has been able to distinguish right from wrong, "and to feel a sense of guilt, ever since he can remem-"ber. It does not appear from observation. For in-"fants discover plain marks of moral depravity, and "appear to act wrong as soon as they begin to act. "And it does not appear from scripture. For the bi-"ble represents infants as sinful, guilty creatures, as "*soon* as they are born; which plainly implies that "they are moral agents. In a word, scripture, rea-"son, observation, and experience, are all in favour of "the moral agency of infants. And if we do not ad-"mit, that moral agency commences in infancy, it is "impossible to determine, or even to form a probable "conjecture, when it does commence." * The whole

* Sermon, Acts xxiv, 16. Pages 191, 192.

of the Doctor's reasonings on this subject he condenses into the following summary, viz. "In a word, scripture, reason, observation and experience, are all in favour of the moral agency of infants." These alledged evidences we will test. First, he appeals to scripture in this vague manner: "The bible represents in-"fants as sinful, guilty creatures, as soon as they are "born, which plainly implies they are moral agents." As no particular text is here expressed in proof of this assertion; and as the doctor's memory may in this instance have failed him, I shall assist him to one which may in some measure relieve him from difficulty. "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go "astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." (Psalms 58, 3.) By only explaining away the figurative sense of this text, and of similar ones; and by rendering them altogether literal, he may in that manner seem to prove the moral agency and wickedness of infants. But another difficulty will here occur. For where can he discover that species of infants, who, as soon as they are born, have the faculty of speech; and can run astray speaking lies? *

* Amongst texts sometimes resorted to by the advocates of an hereditary total depravity of infants, are Isaiah, 48, 8, "thou was't called a transgressor from the womb:" and Proverbs 22, 15, "foolishness (is) bound in the heart of a child; (but) the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Of the former text, "saith *Gataker*, it cannot mean from their natural birth, this passage implying something not common to all, but peculiar to that people, (Israel.") (Whitby.) And of the latter text, it may be noted, that the verb *is*, not being in the original,

His next appeal is to *reason*, but herein he contradicts his own theory, which excludes *reason* from having any thing to do in *his affairs* of conscience; for he says, "If we possessed no mental faculty superiour "to perception, we could never discover the distinct- "ion betwixt moral good and evil. If we now ex- "amine the *power of reason*, we shall find it equally "destitute of all *moral discernment*. It *cannot discov-* "*er* the least merit or demerit, in the conduct of mor- "al agents." ‡ It was, therefore, because he laid his reasons *aside*, when writing on the *moral* agency of *infants*, that such effusions of profound nonsense thus issued from his pen. And doubtless an equal suspension of reason produced the following rhapsody. Infants, "When but a few days old, appear to act "voluntarily in the view of motives. They never fail "for instance, to prefer light to darkness, and sweet to "bitter. By such instances of choosing and refusing, "they appear to be agents. But we cannot suppose "that they are *mere* agents, in these *free*, spontane- "ous, voluntary *exertions*. For if they were *mere* "agents, they could not be men in miniature, nor be "capable of becoming moral agents; for *mere* agents, "are utterly incapable of becoming moral agents. "This has been demonstrated by all the experiments

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is supplied by the translators. But were this foolishness even affirmed of all children, still it could mean a total, moral depravity; because if it did, "the rod of correction could not drive it far away from them."

‡ Ibid, pages 181, 182.

"which have been made upon tamed animals, &c." (Sermon on Acts xxiv, 16. Pages 190, 191.)

This formidable reasoning is precisely of a piece with the following: "If infants are not able to propagate their own species, they are not men in miniature; nor capable of ever becoming men: This has been demonstrated by all the experiments which have been made upon tamed animals; for they could never be made able to propagate men. And if their ability of procreation does not commence in infancy, it is impossible to determine, or even to form a probable conjecture, when it does commence." Logic upon logic! Sir! But we will hear him out. His next appeal is to observation. But as I am unable to tell what others may have discerned in the inarticulate wailings of the new born babe, as I am myself fearful of pronouncing those corrupt, whom Christ caressed, honoured, and pronounced blessed; and as the doctor has himself disclaimed all ability by his powers of perception to judge of them, I must therefore leave their case to his well informed conscience, which, separate from, and independent of the dictates of perception and reason, is adequate to *feel*, and decide upon their real character. His last appeal is to experience, thus, "every person knows, that he has been able to distinguish right from wrong, and to feel a sense of guilt ever since he can remember." This is but begging the question, and at best, an appeal to the very imperfect faculty of memory, which with many, will fall short several years of the time of birth. For my own part, several occurrences are yet

on my memory which happened during my fourth year, but amongst them there is no recollection of a sense of guilt at that early period.

The holy scriptures are the tribunal by which this question should be decided; for their decision is not only authoritative, but also sufficiently explicit. St. Paul thus decides it, "every one that useth milk is "unskilful in the word of righteousness, for he *is a* "*babe*. But strong meat belongeth to them, that are "of *full age*, even those who by reason of *use*, have "their senses exercised, to discern both *good* and *evil*." Hebrews v, 13. From the *imbecility* and *incapacity* of real infancy to discern moral good and evil, he infers the inability of metaphorical infancy to comprehend abstruce doctrines of the gospel. Isaiah next decides, "butter and honey shall he eat, that he may "know how to refuse the evil, and choose the good. "For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and "choose the good, the land that thou abhorest, shall "be forsaken of both her kings." VII; 15, 16. Whatever of mystery may attach to this passage, whether as refering to Christ, or to some other child as a type of Christ, yet in respect to the moral agency of children, it undeniably teaches, that a capacity of understandingly refusing evil, and of intelligently choosing good, are here taught to be indispensable pre-requisites of moral agency and character. And these qualifications are wholly dissimilar from those of the doctor's little agents, who, at a few days old from mere sensation, prefer light to darkness, and sweet to bitter. For the prophet's infantile agent, though fed

with butter and honey, was not considered as morally endowed, until such time as *age* and *understanding* had matured his capacity into acquired ability of moral discernment. And with this strictly agrees, what Almighty God said unto the surly prophet, who pined for the destruction of human kind, viz. "Should not "I spare Ninevah, that great city, wherein are more "than six score thousand persons, that cannot *discern* "betwixt their right hand and their left, and also "much cattle?"

Amongst these undiscerning persons were probably some ideots; but the great body of them unquestionably were infant children. And these children, as well as the cattle were deemed deserving objects of divine compassion. If Jonah was in any wise tinctured with Hopkinsianism, he doubtless, must have ranked children not with *mere* agents, but with *totally depraved moral* agents. And consequently must have considered both parents and children as being each alike personally deserving of destruction. But happy it is for the infantile race of Adam, that however agreed the prophet Jonah and doctor Emmons may be in opinion, as to their moral character of deserts, yet, that Almighty God hath so graciously and unequivocally declared his *most full* dissent from both.

Further absurdities to be noted in my next.

LETTER XII.

SIR,

WERE any other man besides doctor Emmons to have asserted, that, "the *scripture* ascribes all the *actions* of *men* to God, as well as to themselves;" and were such person to maintain in the same sense as the doctor does, that the "*hearts*, and hands of *Satan*, and *wicked* men, are governed by God," he probably would forfeit forever his reputation both for veracity and understanding, in the estimation of many, who now receive these tenets, as gospel truths, for no other reason, but merely because advanced by the man, to whose domination they have surrendered the exclusive right of judging upon these points.

That God so far governs the hearts and hands of wicked men and devils, as often to hold them in chains and fetters, so that they cannot commit all the wickedness, or practise all the mischief which they design, and which, if unrestrained, they would perform, are propositions which no sober minded and well informed person will doubt or deny. But that God excites and stimulates the *hearts* of devils and wicked men, to make them more wicked, and urges them on to practise all the wickedness which they do commit, is what the doctor himself believes, and is the belief which he endeavours to instil into the minds of his readers. With the horrible impiety of this vile tenet, I am not about to intermeddle. This must be accounted for

before the tribunal of that God, whose character is thereby impeached. But its monsterous absurdity, is what I would here more particularly notice. And in order that this absurdity may more distinctly appear, I will apply the doctor's notion of divine influence on the hearts of devils, as an explicative, to two particular scripture passages.

Passage First. "For this purpose the Son of God "was manifested that he might *destroy* the works of "the devil."

Passage Second. Jesus "arrived at the country of "the Gadarenes, where met him, out of the city, a "certain man who had devils a long time, and wear "no clothes; neither abode in any house but in the "tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell "down before him, and with a loud voice said, what "have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most "high? I beseech thee torment me not. And Jesus "asked him, saying, what is thy name? And he said "Legion, because many devils were entered into him. "And they besought him, that he would not com-"mand them to go out into the deep. And there was "there an herd of many swine, feeding on the moun-"tain; and the devils besought him, that he would "suffer them to enter into the swine. And he suffer-"ed them. Then went the devils out of the man, "and entered into the swine: and the herd ran vio-"lently down a steep place, into the lake, and were "choked."

In the former of these passages we learn from St. John, that Christ's errand into this world was to de-

stroy the *devil's works*. And in the latter passage, the Evangelist Luke, presents Christ before us in the very act of fulfiling his important mission. But from doctor Emmons we learn, that the devils were but subordinate agents in the several works which they performed; for according to his doctrine, God governed the devil's *hearts* and *hands* by a *positive exciting* influence. On this plan therefore, deity and devils were co-workers together. And consequently, Christ by destroying the works of the devil, destroyed also the works of his Father. For he destroyed the works of this alliance of co-operation. And from the whole, as thus elucidated, we discover *unity* of purpose, voice, and action, amongst the devils themselves. Whilst *collision* and *opposition* of effort exist betwixt the Almighty Father, and the Son. For the many devils united into *legion*, act most perfectly together, and act only when acted upon. Divinely stimulated, they at first became devils. Under a similar excitement they combined into a legion, and so excited, entered into, and abode in the man. When Christ commanded them to come forth, the Father excited them to solicit permission to enter into the swine; and when permission was obtained, this governing divine stimulus was *expelled* with them: and with and in them, entered into the swine, and, as it before through the legion governed the demoniac, so now through the same medium it precipitated the demoniac herd, to rush headlong into immediate ruin.

But from this detestable tenet, permit me, sir, to call your attention to the doctor's newly invented key for unlocking scripture difficulties, viz. "When "Pharaoh is to be blamed, he is said to harden his "own heart; but when the divine sovereignty is to "be acknowledged, God is said to harden his heart. "So, again, when the guilt of the crucifiers of Christ "is mentioned, they are said to perpetrate the horrid "deed with wicked hands: but when the benevolent "design of the deity is exhibited, the hand, as well as "the counsel of God is said to be concerned therein. "If we carry this idea in our minds, we can easily "expound some passages, which have been often mis-"understood, and misapplied. Amongst others, the "following texts, viz. Psalm CXLI, 4—Psalm CXIX, "36—Isaiah LXIII, 17—Romans VI, 17—James I, "13, 14, 15, 16, 17—and chapter III, 14, 15, 16, "17. In these passages it is denied, that the bad ac-"tions of men may be ascribed to God, and *equally* "denied on the other side, that the good actions of "men may be ascribed to themselves: but yet it is "asserted in these same passages, that the agency of "God is concerned in disposing men both to good "and evil." "Here is no difficulty, *if we only allow* "that there is a propriety *sometimes*, in ascribing the "actions of men wholly to themselves, and *sometimes*, "in ascribing their actions wholly to God." "This "single idea, will solve a seeming difficulty which "runs through the bible. Since the *scripture ascribes* "*all the actions of men to God*, as well as to them-"selves, we may justly conclude that the *divine agen-*

"*cy is as much concerned* in their bad, as in their "good actions."*

This master-piece of ingenuity and effrontery, requires a close and particular examination. I begin with the *insidious* inference, "Since the scripture *ascribes* all the *actions* of men to *God*, as well as to themselves, &c." But from whence is this inference derived? Is it immediately from plain and positive assertions of scripture? or is it through an obscure, perplexed and impotent medium? or yet, is it from texts of doubtful signification, seemingly on his side, forcibly yoked up with other texts, which openly and unequivocally disclaim all connexion with his cause, his argument, and his inference? His *medium* and his *ground* of inference shall each speak for themselves.

His medium. "Here is no difficulty, *if* we *only* "*allow* that there is a propriety *sometimes* in ascribing "the actions of men wholly to themselves, and *some-* "*times* in ascribing their actions wholly to God. It "is proper *sometimes* to ascribe men's good actions "wholly to themselves; and *sometimes* equally proper "to ascribe their bad actions wholly to themselves. "While on the other hand, it is *sometimes* proper to "ascribe men's good actions wholly to God; and "*sometimes* equally proper to ascribe their bad actions "wholly to him." Here we are fatigued with a jabbering of *sometimes* and *sometimes* and *sometimes*, &c. &c. And what is it all for? but, if possible, to manufacture *one all times*, out of just half a dozen

* Sermon on Genesis, 45, 5. Pages 38, 39.

sometimeses. But as *sometimes* and *sometimes*, an hundred times repeated, will not make one *all times*, it therefore *cannot* be admitted, that the "Idea" of "the scriptures, ascribing all the *actions* of men to God," is either a *true* or a *scriptural idea*.

From this despicable medium of inference, we now will resort to the *ground* from whence derived. And here conforming to the scripture rule of the first being last, and the last becoming first, we shall begin with the apostle James, who, through *violence* is impressed into this service, and who here, instead of meanly cringing to Hopkinsian authority, boldly enters his protest against it. "Let *no man say* when he is tempted, I "am tempted of God: For God cannot be tempted "of evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every "man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own "lust, and enticed, &c." (1: 13, 14.) Temptation, in the sense as here used by the apostle, does not so much mean external solicitation to sin, as that internal seduction thereto, whereby the external allurement becomes unhappily effectual. Temptation, externally may be from satan, from wicked men, and from various surrounding enticing objects: but internal effectual seduction, is here taught to be *only* from the man himself who sins. And it is here as clearly taught, that as God cannot himself be the subject of temptation, so as to be accessible to its defilement; so, that for the very same reasons also, he cannot seduce any of his creatures into that pollution and guilt, which are so perfectly opposite to the immutable holiness of his own nature. And whilst the apostle thus vindicates

the divine character against all suspicion, so he also most expressly, and in the most peremptory manner, forbids every man from imputing his subjection to sin, to the agency of his creator. But Hopkinsianism long habituated to ascribing the causation of sin to God, and regardless of apostolic reproof, subverts the apostles own doctrine, which denies the sinful actions of men to be the actions of God; by *positively* asserting it to *affirm*, what it as *positively denies*.

That God should so far be concerned in the good actions of pious men, as to command, approve, reward, and occasionally to promote them by a positive exciting influence, is in no degree incompatible with the divine honour and character. And as such, was taught by this apostle, "do not err my beloved brethren. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from "above, and cometh down from the Father of lights." (James 1, 16, 17.) And from whom also cometh, "the wisdom that is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to "be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, and "without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (111, 17.)

Such, and such only, are the doctrines taught by this apostle concerning human and divine agency. But the attempt to compel him to teach otherwise, redounds neither to the honour of Hopkinsianism, nor yet to the credit of its most able advocate.

Although these passages thus from James, and the others from Psalms, &c. to be yet considered; were adduced by the doctor, as proofs of all human actions, being God's actions; still they were so adduced, not as *principals*, but only as *auxiliaries*; the chief de-

pendence being placed in supposed proofs, from the circumstance of Joseph's brethren selling him into Egypt; from the case likewise, of Pharaoh's refusal to permit the Israelites departure out of Egypt; and also, from the nature of the conduct of Christ's enemies in his sufferings and crucifixion. And this in no small degree accounts for the doctor's great embarrassment, which constrained him to shuffle over and over his *sometimes* and *sometimes*, &c. as before noticed. Because his object was to endeavour to prove, what his means of proof could not possibly enable him to effect. For his attempt was to establish a universal proposition by infering it from particular premises. For if he could even have proved, that God irresistibly caused Joseph's brethren to sell him; that he in like manner caused Pharaoh's refusal, and also in like manner caused Christ's enemies to betray and crucify him: Still no universal inference could herefrom regularly have been deduced; because, although, "*particular* propositions are contained in *universals*, and may be infered from them; yet *universals* are not contained, in particulars, *nor* can be inferred from them." (Watts' Logick.) But it is the doctor's infelicity, that even these *particular* propositions cannot be so proved, as to constitute even the limited human actions to which they relate, the actions of God. But for proof of this, I must refer you to a future letter on predestination and divine decrees, where this subject will be more largely discussed. And therefore, I shall now proceed to consider the remaining auxiliary texts.

The first of these is Psalm CIX, 36, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness." The second being also like this, the words of David, and being nearly similar in signification, I therefore shall consider both under one head. Psalm CXLI, 4, "Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practise wicked works, with men that work iniquity."

The heart which offered up both of these prayers, was previously inclined to God and to his testimonies: And whilst it was perfectly consistent, that God should in answer to the fervent prayers of such a person, work in him still further to will and do of his good pleasure; so it was no less consistent, that such person distrusting himself, when exposed to seduction from a variety of temptations, should seek assistance from God to enable him to resist the evil. And thus it was, that David prayed, in the former text, for aid against seduction, from objects alluring to covetousness; and in the latter text, for assistance against temptation from vicious example. And with this exposition of these texts, Christ's words in Matthew VI, 13, most exactly agree. "*Lead* us *not* into *tempta-*" *tion*, but *deliver* us from *evil*." "This might be "translated, *and lead us not into temptation, but so as* "*to deliver us from the evil*, either by removing the "temptation itself, when it proves too hard for us, or "by mitigating its force, or by increasing our strength "to resist it, as God shall see most for his glory." (Macknight.) This subject admits of further illustration from Genesis XXII, 4, and from the annexed commentary. "*It came to pass that God did tempt*

"*Abraham.*" "*God did tempt Abraham.* The ori-
"ginal word here is very emphatic. *Ve-ha-Elohim*
"*nissah eth Abraham:* and the Elohim he *tried* this
"Abraham. God brought him into such circumstan-
"ces, as exercised and discovered his faith, love and
"obedience. Though the word *tempt*, from *tento*,
"signifies no more than to prove or try, yet as it is
"now generally used to imply a solicitation to evil, in
"which way God *never tempts any man;* it would
"be well to avoid it here." (A. Clarke.) And in correspondency with these several texts, as above explained and commented on, are the words of the kinsman of our Lord, viz. "Let no man (no, not even
"Moses nor Abraham, David, nor Nathaniel Em-
"mons,) say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of
"God; for God cannot be tempted with evil; neither
"tempteth he any man." (James 1, 13.)

Auxiliary text third. Isaiah LXIII, 17. "O Lord why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" The prophet here speaks *not* individually, *but* nationally: Not of punishment in eternity, for necessitated sinfulness in time; but of punishment in this life inflicted on the Jews for their aggravated rebellions against God. In verses 9, 10, he thus speaks concerning the dealings of God towards that people, and of their ungrateful conduct in return; "In all their affliction he was af-
"flicted, and the angel of his presence saved them.
"In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and
"he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.
"But they rebelled, and *vexed* his holy Spirit: there-

"fore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought "against them." And what the prophet thus described as having been of old; so in verses 17, 18, he accommodated to the sinfulness of the people, and to the providential corrections of his day. "O Lord, "why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and "hardened our hearts from thy fear? Return, for thy "servants' sake, the tribes of thine *inheritance*. The "people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little "while; our adversaries have *trodden down* thy sanc- "tuary." Nothing, therefore, was further from the prophet's intention, than to accuse God with being the author of their sins, or the actor of their misdeeds. But his object was most manifestly, openly to confess the sinfulness of the nation, and the just judgments of God upon them for their manifold offences. God in his holy displeasure had forsaken, and given them up to their own blind counsels, and thereby into the hands of their enemies. And in so doing, he acted not according to Hopkinsianism, but in conformity with his own rule of most righteous retribution, viz. "*Thine own* wickedness shall correct thee, and thy "backslidings shall reprove thee; *know*, therefore, "and *see* that it is an *evil thing* and bitter, that thou "hast forsaken the Lord thy God; and that my fear "is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts." (Jeremiah II, 19.) This divine method of recompense, whereby wicked men, being abandoned to their own lusts and devices, are thereby made their own most merciless tormenters, is declared, not only by Isaiah, Jeremiah and David, but is also most expressly com-

mented on in the new-testament. St. Paul thus remarks thereon in Romans xi, 8, 9, 10. "According "as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of "slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears "that they should not hear unto this day. And Dav- "id saith, Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, "and a stumbling block, and a *recompense* unto "them: Let their eyes be darkened, that they may "not see, and bow down their back alway." And both Christ and Paul explain Isaiah vi, 9, 10, in precisely the same words. The former, in Matthew xiii, 14, 15, and the latter, in Acts xxviii, 26, 27. Their words are, "In them is fulfilled the prophesy "of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, "and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, "and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is "waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and "their eyes *they have closed*, lest at any time they "should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, "and should understand with their heart, and should "be converted, and I should heal them." Truly different then, is this commentary of Christ and his Apostle, from that of Hopkinsianism. For whilst the former ascribe the whole agency of *closing* their eyes to the corrupt Jews themselves; the latter makes that act, and all their other acts, to be the actions of God himself.

The supposed difficulty in the scripture expressions of God's "*hardening* hearts from his fear," seems to arise from the mistaken notion of a positive divine influence, and from the *gross* errour of imagining that

God should corrupt his own creatures. For God makes no man wicked; but sometimes *recompenses* those who have made themselves corrupt, by justly abandoning them to the consequences of their own depravity. And "when the subject in question is a "person who has hardened his own heart, by *fre-* "*quently* resisting the *grace* and *spirit* of God; all "sober christians will agree with St. Augustin, that "God does not harden men, by infusing malice into "them, but by not imparting mercy to them. (And "that) God does not work this hardening of heart in "man, but he may be said to harden him, whom he "refuses to soften, and repel him, whom he refuses to "call." (A. Clarke, on Exodus, iv, 24.)

Lastly. We are now to notice Romans vi, 17; but therewith I shall connect the sixteenth verse, viz. "Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves ser- "vants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey: "whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto "righteousness. But God be thanked that ye were "the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the "heart, that form of doctrine which was delivered "you."

As it was an important fact, and of great notoriety, that numerous, learned, critical and pious commentators had condemned the common reading in this seventeenth verse, as an errour of the translators; it therefore became incumbent on the doctor, to have refuted these objections, before he had pressed it into his service in its present form.

Gell says of the present reading, that "it was a foul oversight of the translators."* Doddridge renders the text in question, "But thanks be to God, that "whereas ye were the servants of sin, ye have obeyed "from the heart, the model of doctrine into which ye "were delivered." And Macknight renders it after this manner; "But thanks to God, that *although* ye "were the slaves of sin, yet ye have obeyed from the "heart, the *mould* of doctrine into which ye were de-"livered." As each of these distinguished criticks, as well as others who might here be cited, thus condemn the present reading of this verse, and consequently condemn the doctor's appropriate use of it: propriety, therefore, demands of him a settlement of this point with these learned commentators. But as it is a question too important for mere verbal and grammatical disquisition, I will, in the mean time, seek the true sense of this disputed text from analogy, or from its due connection with other scriptures.

We find almighty God thus speaking by Jeremiah; "Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the proph-"ets, rising early and sending them: saying, oh! do "not the abominable thing that I hate. But they "hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, to turn from "their wickedness." XLIV, 4, 5. Moses informs us, that "God saw that the wickedness of man was "great in the earth, and that every imagination of the "thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. "And it *repented* the Lord, that he made man on

* Essay for a new translation, page 435.

"the earth, and it *grieved* him at *his heart*." Genesis "VI, 5, 6. And speaking of Onan he asserts, that "the thing which he did *displeased* the Lord: where- "upon he slew him also. (Genesis XXXVIII, 10.) And we learn from Nathan the prophet, and from Gad the Seer, two *grievous* offences committed by David, which greatly displeased the Lord. Had Gad the Seer, then been but an Hopkinsian, and in conformity with his belief, have given thanks to the Lord for David's crime in numbering Israel. Had Nathan been of the same sect, and offered up praise for the defilement of Bathsheba, and for the murder of Uriah. And had Moses been of the same denomination, and sung praises for Onan's offence, or ascribed the atrocities of antediluvian sinners to their Creator in pæns of praise, whilst the Creator's heart was *grieved* for having conferred existence on such self perverted transgressors. And had Jeremiah, in unison of full chorus, congratulated almighty God, because his prophets were disregarded, his laws trampled upon, his entreaties despised, the *abominable thing that he hated*, insultingly *perpetrated* by a brutish generation, and all this too, as done by such a divine exciting agency, as properly made all these actions the actions of God himself: Surely, there would in each of these cases, be reason to apprehend *more* provocation to God Almighty, from such insidious thanksgiving, than from all the united crimes of the first mentioned offenders: Unless the blindness of an invincible prejudice, like the *veil* on the heart of persecuting Saul of Tarsus; might have diminished their guilt, into a

pardonable sin of ignorance, done in unbelief. And had our translators but duly weighed these things in their own minds, assuredly they would have shrunk from so rendering the writings of St. Paul, as to have made him to have uttered sentiments *so horridly impious!*

Nor would this gross impropriety have ever occurred, had due attention but been paid to the preceding verse, viz, "know ye not, that to whom *ye yield* "*yourselves servants* to obey, his servants ye are to "whom ye obey, &c." This surrender of their liberty and persons to the bondage of sin, is here charged wholly upon themselves, as their *own sole* act. Neither Adam, nor Satan, nor any other being, is in any wise implicated therein. And as this act of surrender, in yielding themselves to bondage was solely their own act, so the consequent bondage was also, solely their own bondage. But it was not so in respect to their emancipation. This was not their act, but the act of God. And therefore, as they, and they only had been blamed for their own misconduct, so God, and he alone, is here praised for *his act* in conferring on them, through the gospel, so great a salvation. Their slavery under sin, was no cause for praise to any being, but was an abundant cause for heavy censure upon the authors of it; whilst their deliverance, through redeeming love, and the energy of the spiritual baptism, called forth apostolical thanksgiving and praise.

The doctor's selected scripture passages, in proof of the "*idea*," that "the scripture ascribes all the actions of men to God, as well as to themselves," having

thus proved utterly abortive in respect to his design; permit me, sir, to invite you to follow him in his further attempt, to establish this same absurd and *impious idea* in his most extravagant comment on Phillipians II, 13.

The text. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

The comment. "Men are no more capable of act-"ing *independently* of God, in one instance than anoth-"er. If they need any kind or degree of divine agen-"cy in *doing good*, they need *precisely* the same *kind* "and *degree* of divine agency in *doing evil*. This is "the dictate of reason, and the scripture says the same. "*It is God, who worketh in men* both *to will and to* "*do*, in all cases without exception."* And this *agency* he equally extends to the devil, thus, "neither "*satan*, nor *wicked men*, can do us any harm, but "under the *agency* of him, who governs their *hearts* "and *hands*."† Such are the extravagances of these assertions that they rather deserve *contempt* than minute investigation. But lest any should construe silence into inability to reply, I shall consisely point out their absurdities.

The leading fallacy, and that which gives birth to every other fallacy, in the above monstrous positions, so unqualifiedly asserted *shelters* itself under the *ambiguity* of the terms *dependence on divine agency*. *Divine agency*, and dependence thereon have each a variety of significations. It is one kind of divine

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* Sermon on Genesis 45, 5. Pages 39, 40. † Ibid, page 48.

agency which creates, and another which upholds in being, what is already created, and the latter is *dependent* on the former, for if nothing were created, it would be impossible to exert upholding agency, as there would be nothing for it to exert itself upon. Here one species of divine agency is dependent on another; viz. on a previously existing species of divine agency. And that they are each distinct species of agency, is undeniable; for mere upholding agency would never originate any thing; and *creating agency* continued would never cease its prodigies of new existences. Now on *both* of these species of divine agency, created existences of whatsoever kind or nature, animate or inanimate, natural or spiritual, intelligent and rational, or otherwise, are all absolutely dependent both for *being*, and for *continuance* in *being*.

Divine *agency*, partially suspending the laws of nature in the performance of miracles, and such *agency* in the suspension of the natural operation of human faculties in *visions*, extraordinary *revelations* and such like, I shall pass over as having no relation to this subject. But there is another species which is so interestingly and essentially important, that it should never be lost sight of, viz. the *influence* of *divine agency* through the *medium* of *divine revelation*, for this is incessantly *operating*, although (the operation, or) agency that gave it existence, is itself ceased. And thus it is with all exertions of creating agency; the act that produced, *ceases;* but the *thing* produced, *continues* as long as deity is pleased to uphold it in existence.

Now, although God is not continually imparting new scripture revelations of his will, to mankind. Yet while he continues the Bible as the hallowed repository of the rule of our faith, and practice: while he therein exhibits his law and its penalties, his gospel and its promises. Whilst he explicitly therein, as sanctioned by the infinity and immutability of his truth and power, justice and mercy, presents before mankind the consequences both in *time* and in eternity of *obedience* and *disobedience*, there is through this medium of divine revelation, a perpetual operation of divine agency on mankind, wheresoever this revelation is providentially conferred. And this brings us precisely to the very point under consideration. In the light therefore shed on this subject by the foregoing incontrovertible principles, we now will test the doctor's presumptuous affirmation, that "men are no more capable of acting "*independently* of God, in one instance, than another. "(That) if they need any kind or degree of *divine* "agency in doing good, they need precisely the *same* "*kind* and *degree* of *divine* agency in *doing evil.*" Here then lie exposed to view, both the *artifice* and *fallacy* of this rash affirmation.

The artifice consists in an implied appeal to every man's common sense to extort from him a confession that all men, good and bad, are alike dependent for ability to act, upon *divine creating* and *upholding* agency: but as all men either will not or cannot perceive the nice distinction between *power* to act, as imparted by the forementioned agency, and *excitement* to act by another kind of agency, wholly distinct from

the foregoing; so they are likely to be ensnared inadvertently into an adoption of the *shocking fallacy*, that "*precisely* the *same kind* and *degree* of *divine* agency is needed to do *evil* as to do *good*." What! did the doctor really forget the existence and *operation* of divine agency, through the energy of all that may be denominated *motives* in the holy scriptures? Or did he consider this agency as of no consequence whatsoever in the government of accountable agents? Good men uniformly confess this divine agency through the word, *exciting* them to submit to the authority of the divine law, and inducing them to yield obedience to the gospel; and wicked men, sometimes drawn and melted, at other times fearing and awakened to a sense of duty and of danger, afford demonstration of divine agency, through the power of the word on their hearts and consciences. In order then to free the doctor's assertion from this millstone of fallacy and contradiction yoked on its neck, he must prove the experience of both good and bad men to be utterly erroneous; that is, he must prove that no divine agency whatsoever operates through the medium of motives contained in the bible, upon either the one or the other: or else that the operation upon each, is precisely of the same kind and in the same degree; but which is a contradiction unless he can produce two opposite bibles each possessed of equal evidence of divine authority and origin. The present bible will serve his purpose as respects good men, because its commandments and exhortations, and its promises, threatenings, and conditions, all afford proof of divine exciting agency to repentance, faith

and obedience. But the other for bad men must be exactly the reverse, it must threaten the punishment of hell as awaiting upon all penitent, believing, obedient and holy persons; and must promise heaven, and eternal life and glory, only to the impenitent, the disobedient, and unholy. And when the doctor shall have produced this latter bible, written by another Moses and other prophets, as evidently sent of God, as they were, and another New Testament written by other Evangelists, and Apostles, sent by some other person, as evidently the only begotten Son of God, as Jesus Christ was, and performing as many and as great miracles as he did, but teaching doctrines perfectly in contradiction to his doctrines, then, and not until then, will the doctor be able to maintain his most extravagant and reprehensible assertion.

But in order to exonerate himself from this intolerable mass of absurdity, no doubt the doctor is ready to reply that the sameness of divine agency both in *kind* and *degree* which he meant, was not, the intermediate agency which operates through divine revelation; but, an *immediate excitement* by the divine spirit operating directly on the heart and producing all its exercises of every description; and for this reason, because he lays it down as a maxim, that, "*mind cannot act* any more than *matter* can move, without a divine agency." Having in Letters IX and X, formally replied to this *inertness* of *mind*, I shall not here repeat what was there observed. But, as the doctor has handled the subject of MENTAL MACHINERY with greater ingenuity, (and consequently with more ad-

vantage to Hopkinsianism,) than either West or Edwards; I shall in my next letter particularly notice his argument on this point; and then proceed to other particulars of Hopkinsianism.

LETTER XIII.

SIR,

THE doctor thus remarks, and reasons. "Many suppose, if we were as dependent upon God, "for all our voluntary exercises, as a clock or a watch "is dependent upon weights or springs for all its mo- "tions; then we are as incapable of moral agency, as "these, or any other mere machines. But the *fallacy* "of this mode of reasoning may be easily exposed. "The *fallacy* lies here. It takes for granted, that the "*only* reason why a watch, or clock, or any other ma- "chine, is not a moral agent, is simply because it *is* "*acted upon*, or depends upon some power out of it- "self for all its motions. But is this true? Let us "make the trial. Suppose a clock, which has hither- "to been dependent, and moved by weights and "wheels, should this moment become *independent*, "and move of itself. Is this clock now, any more a "moral agent than it was before? Are its motions, "now, any moral exercises, or any more worthy of "praise or blame, than they were before? By no "means. But why not? Because, notwithstanding it "is now independent, and moves of itself, yet being

"still *matter* and not *mind*, it moves without percep-
"tion, reason, conscience, and volition, which are at-
"tributes essential to a moral agent. The reason why
"a clock, or watch, or any other machine is incapable
"of moral agency, is not because it is either depen-
"dent, or independent, but simply because it is sense-
"less matter, and totally destitute of all the principles
"of moral action. As neither dependence, nor inde-
"pendence can make a machine, a mind; so neither
"dependence nor independence, can make a mind a
"machine. It is impertinent, therefore, to reason from
"*matter* to *mind* on this subject."* (Emmons.)

The errours contained in the above observations and reasonings, although neither *few*, nor *small*, yet, are so glossed over with plausible appearances of consistency, that close attention is requisite, in order to unmask the enormities of their true character. These errours may be classed under three distinct, general heads; viz. Deficiency of moral qualifications. Misconception, and consequent misrepresentation of his opponents objection. And, hostility betwixt the doctor's *maxim* and manner of reasoning. These we will notice separately.

First. Deficiency of moral qualifications. A moral agent, according to the foregoing definition, is *mind*, endued with perception, reason, conscience, and volitions. Had the doctor but substituted *soul*, or *spirit*, for *mind*, and annexed to the above recited endowments, *affections* and *passions*, and to these, still ad-

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* Sermon on Phillippians II, 12, 13, Pages 216, 217.

ded, susceptibility of impressions on the *heart*, exquisitely powerful, arising from the intimacy of union, betwixt soul and body; his definition of the moral agency of mankind in this world, would then, have been much more complete. But for want of these, he has exhibited only a meagre skeleton of human moral agency, scarcely deserving to hold rank, with the imaginary *cogitating* machinery of Priestly, and the materialists.

And whilst his definition is thus mutilated, in respect to enumerated component parts, so it is still further defective, by reason of *his meaning* in the *use* of the terms, *perception*, *reason* and *conscience:* which use seems to be but to impose on the understandings of his readers; for having heretofore recognised, that in his view, infants, as soon as born, have *perception*, *reason* and *conscience* sufficient to render them moral agents; consequently these terms with him are but mere sound without sense, shadow without substance, and pretence without reality. It is true he adds *volition* to these his wood, hay and stubble materials; but then his sense of volition is freedom *without* liberty, power *without* ability, and an *activity* which is *passive*. Power to choose, (when externally acted upon) but no power to refuse: and when reversely acted on, to refuse, but not to chuse, seems to be a kind of liberty *much* resembling that possessed by poor blind Sampson, who *had freedom* sufficient to grind in the prison, but *no liberty* to escape therefrom; whilst he exercised those *necessitated* volitions, which moved his brawny arms to whirl the ponderous mill.

Secondly. Misconception, and consequent misrepresentation of his opponents objection. The objection is, "That if we are as dependent upon God for "all our voluntary exercises as a clock or watch "is dependent upon weights or springs for all its "motions, then we are as incapable of moral agency "as these, or any other mere machine." To this he replies, that "It takes for granted, that the *only* rea- "son why a watch, a clock, or any other mere ma- "chine, is not a moral agent, is *simply* besause it de- "pends upon some power out of itself, for all its mo- "tions." He would indeed be a simpleton, who could imagine that self motion *alone*, would constitute any agent a moral agent, and still much more simple, should he so imagine, of a self moving watch or clock, which would be but to imagine a double absurdity, viz. To ascribe moral agency to a subject, possessed of but one quality *essential* to a moral agent, whilst *wholly* destitute of others, *no less* essential. And to suppose *self motion* possessed by an agent *wholly* destitute of *soul* and *spirit*, of *sensations* and *affections*, of perception, reason, conscience and will; would be to suppose an agent exerting self motion, whilst utterly destitute of every principle of such action. Neither of these despicable absurdities had any place in the foregoing objection; and yet it is the former one of them, that the doctor imagines he has discovered therein. This alone he exposes, pursues and combats. And whilst thus hunting down the fancied objection, the real one remains evaded and unanswered. The *actual* objection consists in maintaining that

however otherwise qualified for moral agency, yet, if mankind are as *utterly* dependent on external agency, from whatever source, for all their acts of will, as a clock or watch is dependent upon weights and springs for all its motions; that the former are as undeserving of rewards and punishments as the latter, or as any other mere machines. The validity of this objection we will now test, by the doctor's own method of trial. "Suppose a clock, which hitherto was but senseless "matter, should *this moment* be so transformed into "mind, as to become endued with as large a portion "of perception, reason, conscience and volition, as any "new-born infant; but yet so, as that all its volitions "are still as wholly dependent on wheels, pendulum, "and weights, as its senseless motions formerly were. "Is this clock now, any more a moral agent than it was "before? Are its volitions now, any moral exercises "or any more worthy of praise or blame, than they "were before? By no means. But why not? Be- "cause, notwithstanding it is now become mind, and "exercises perception, reason, conscience and volition, "yet, being still wholly and absolutely dependent for "all its volitions, on weights, wheels and pendulum, "and consequently totally destitute of self governing "power over its own volitions, an attribute essential "to moral agency; it therefore rises only to hold rank "amongst *mental*, or *cogitating machinery*." (Re- tort.)

But we proceed, thirdly, to notice hostility betwixt the doctor's *maxim*, and *manner* of *reasoning*.

His maxim. "It is impertinent to reason from *matter* to *mind* on this subject."

His *manner* of *reasoning* notwithstanding. "As "neither dependence nor independence can make a "machine a mind; so neither dependence, nor inde- "pendence, can make a mind a machine." "For as "*matter* cannot move, so neither can mind act with- "out a divine agency."

The above inconsistences, as well as many others, into which this celebrated writer has fallen, in his strenuous opposition to a power in mankind of originating and effecting their own acts of will; seem principally to have arisen from his notion of *inertness* in mind; whereby his ideas thereon aproximate mind and matter so *nearly* to each other. Had he not possessed too independent a spirit, he might in debating the claim to a self determining power of volition in man, have avoided entangling himself in so many absurdities of his own.

For by availing himself of the bewildering sophistry of Edwards on the will, he might thereby greatly have entangled all such claims by surrounding, obscuring, and overwhelming them, with the formidable jargon of "Motives being determiners of the will." It's "al- "ways being determined by the strongest motive." And "that the will always follows the last dictate of the understanding, &c. &c." But still, what would avail every such attempt to wrest the control of a man's own volitions from himself, in order in all cases to transfer it, into the possession of a power out of himself.

For such transfer reducing mankind into machines, would, according to every true principle of reason, equity, and law, inevitably attach the whole praise and blame, of volitions and actions, so necessitated to the resistless cause, or first, and supreme agent.

Nor is it difficult independently of arguing from consequences, to reply to the Edwardean scheme of subjecting the will invariably to the irresistible control of motives. For, however greatly he may have obscured and perplexed the subject by sophistical and tautological definition, still the subject is itself plain. Motives in themselves, possess no power of domination. They are not determiners, but inducements to volition.

The strength or imbecility of a motive, is not in itself, but is communicated by the man or person, who views it. Place a trinket and wedge of gold before a *savage*. Place a similar trinket and a like golden wedge before a *miser*. The trinket will be *prized* by the one, and *despised* by the other; the gold disregarded by the one, and adored by the other: and yet both trinkets, and both wedges are equal in themselves; although so unequal as objects of estimation. It therefore is not motives which govern the heart and mind, but the *man* through his heart and mind who governs the motives.* The reason therefore, why a

* With the foregoing sentiment the following seems strictly to accord. "Wherever the appearances of (things in) the material world, are expressive to us, of qualities we love, or admire, our minds, instead of being governed by the character

volition is one way, rather than another way, is not in the motives, but in the man, stamping such weight on each motive, as accords with his own heart and mind.

When a motive *inducing* to action is presented whether through sensation or perception to a man well established in piety and virtue, he will instantly consult his conscience. If the case is of doubtful complexion, conscience will consult reason, reason will summon memory to perform its office; during the deliberation, interest of temporal kind, may duly come into view; but conscience, keeping a steadfast eye upon the obligations of divine law and revelation, will decide according to their demands. The man having forborne volition, and receiving as authoritative the dictate of conscience, now obeys its injunction by an acceptance or rejection of the motive. But if one habituated to evil courses, is solicited by a motive tending to the gratification of some often indulged propension; conscience but too generally is forgotten, its dictates slighted, and its voice suppressed, whilst the predominant passion, assuming dictatorial authority, prescribes to the yielding slave of his own imperious lusts. If the person thus solicited, be such a one as St. James describes, viz. "A *double* minded man and *unstable* in all his ways," he probably will consult conscience, convenience, temporal interests, and sensual

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"of external objects, are enabled to bestow upon them a charac-
"ter which (intrinsically) does not belong to them." (Alison on taste.)

affections. As these may happen to balance in influence; his hesitancy will be of longer or of shorter duration: meanwhile conscience remonstrates, exclaims, and endeavours to rouse in its behalf, the *fears* of hell, and *hopes* of heaven. Avaricious affections attempt to charm with shining gold, and silver heaps. Love of ease pleads impossibility of painful effort. And sensual propensions incline to the allurement of fleshly lusts. Distracted are the views of the weak man until some one prevails over its competitors. Hath conscience obtained its demands as commissioned by the divine authority of law and gospel, the man bows willingly to God, to duty, and to eternal interests; disdaining each meaner consideration of whatsoever kind. Hath avarice obtained its suit, the sordid wretch bowing to the unrighteous mammon, for the glittering toy, wills grace on earth, and heavenly joys away. Is love of ease predominant, the opportunity of doing good is suffered to pass unheeded by; whilst the omission posts swift to heaven, with intelligence of the "*talent buried*" by the "unprofitable servant." But, has the flesh with its affections and lusts, extinguished "that light which is *life*, and the true light, which lighteth *every* man that *cometh into the world*." (John 1, 4, 9.) And with clamorous importunity, silenced conscience and its auxiliaries hope and fear; then the wretched victim of his own corruption, now alike regardless of heaven, and hell, and of each minor consideration, rushes headlong into the fool's paradise of a momentary enjoyment. Were it possible for motives to influence by an *irresistible* necessity, and im-

possible for man to prescribe the limits within which their influence should operate, man would be a machine: his will as the *beam* of the balance; and the motives operate *not* by *moral*, but *natural* influence; even precisely as weights do in a scale. Fully aware of this inevitable consequence of the Edwardean system; and equally apprized of the fatality to Calvinism, should a controling power over motives be admitted to belong to man himself; the discerning Hopkins, and acute Emmons endeavoured to evade this difficulty, by transfering the control over motives, from mankind, to the Deity.

This stratagem, so adroitly devised by these ingenious divines, was productive of most singular effects. For Edwardean men, who before were degraded to the condition and drudgery of beams and scales, ascending or descending under the *extrinsick* weight of *motives*, were now suddenly metamorphosed into musical instruments, on which, in the view of motives, Deity himself operates; producing such harmonious or discordant notes, as He may think most proper. And like to the Edwardean man, now become Hopkinsian; so also is Hopkinsianism itself. It is harmonious, and yet discordant. It harmonizes the feelings of the man who feels conscious, that in all his *exercises*, he is but the passive, or the active instrument of the will and operations of his Creator. All his volitions, of whatever kind, yield delight to the heart, and add glory to the character of God. Deity would be infinitely unhappy were he destitute of this and such like instruments, on whom thus to operate. Were

men not thus acted upon, they would be wholly useless; mere inert beings, totally incapable of ever becoming fit subjects, either for hell or heaven. For "mind cannot *act any more* than *matter* can move without a *divine agency*."

Such are the symphonies and harmonious sounds, thrilling from Hopkinsian lore. But the doleful ditty, "*man* a *machine*:" The jargon, "Spirit as *inert* to *action*, as *matter* is to *motion*:" The contradiction, "man *free*, though his every volition necessitated by an invisible agent, distinct from his own soul:" The blasphemy, "God the *author* of sin:" The absurdity, "man alone to blame:" The injustice, "man invariably obedient to divine agency, and yet, must endure eternally the wrath divine:" Such are the notes *dissonant*, *harshly* vibrating amidst the *tremulous chords* of the Hopkinsian base.

As internal excitement on the human heart from invisible agency, is the main spring of Hopkinsian activity, it demands special attention.

Excitement of this description, as taught by divine inspiration, is essentially different from that of Hopkinsianism. The former is of two kinds, viz. from God and from the devil. The latter is affirmed to be of one kind only, and exclusively to belong to Deity. The scriptures teach that God excites men to good only; and that all excitement to sin from invisible agency, is from satan and his emissaries alone. But Hopkinsianism, whilst it ascribes all excitement to good to Deity; likewise attributes to him all energetick excitement to evil: It admits of an *impotent* ex-

citement to evil by satan upon the human heart, but asserts an efficient one by Deity irresistibly producing sin of every description. As the design here is not to point out the horrible enormity of imputing the causation of sin to God, as being truly a blasphemous absurdity; but to detect the *fallacy* of *irresistible internal excitement*, I shall keep this point principally in view. And in order to do it the more explicitly, I shall concede irresistible excitement in the following cases. First, to evil, as exemplified in the case of wicked men, who having so corrupted their own hearts as to have seared their consciences as with an hot iron; and by such aggravated offences, so grieved, resisted and quenched the divine Spirit, as that, at length, abandoned of God, they are left in the possession of satan, unto whom they had yielded themselves as slaves, (Romans vi, 16) and who now hurries them on to inevitable destruction. And secondly, irresistible excitement to good, by divine operation, is admitted in such instances as these which follow. First. The case of Balaam affords an example of such internal influence, both on his perception and will, whilst he prophesied of, and blessed Israel: But whatever goodness was in these acts themselves, no part of it belonged to Balaam the machine; but it belonged wholly unto God, the exciting agent. Secondly. Good men, such as Daniel, Ezekiel, and St. John, have been so governed by irresistible internal divine influence during visions and revelations, as to have had the natural operation of their mental and moral faculties so suspended, as that such operations

could not have been imputed to them as virtuous in their conduct, only so far as they might previously have freely sought such operations by prayer, or have possessed any remnant of liberty during such influence; or, after its cessation, have made a wise and faithful use of such extraordinary communications. And thirdly. In all cases where Deity, by a natural, necessitating influence, may turn the human heart in its volitions and exercises "as rivers of water are turned;" moral agency and accountability, during all such influence, are wholly suspended, and the person but a machine while under such operation. But it is far otherwise in all cases of internal divine excitement to good, wherein human agency, unnecessitated to co-action, co-operates with divine influence in one or both of the ways following. First, in the case of the sinner, who hearing the law and gospel preached, discovers through the illumination of the divine Spirit, his sinful and ruined condition, in consequence of his own misconduct. Sensible of his danger, he supplicates for mercy. His language is that of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Weary, heavy laden, and oppressed beneath the bondage of corruption, he seeks rest to his soul, under the light burthen and easy yoke of Christ. He prays for the gift of the holy spirit, further to enlighten and regenerate him. He agonizes to enter in at the strait gate, and whilst asking, seeking, and knocking, at the door of mercy, unexpectedly he hears the Saviour's voice. He now discovers Christ, standing and knocking for entrance, at the door of his own heart. Ample atoning mercy

and merit, melt his hardness into contrition. His unbelief yields to evidence. Exercising faith, he with active will unbars the bolted door. The redeemer with every grace now enters; whilst the heart once desolate is now replenished with joys untasted by any but by souls new born.

We now proceed to a view of the secondary mode of internal divine excitement, as consistent with moral freedom and agency. The internal influence hereby intended, is that, which operates in those already regenerated; thereby upholding and accelerating them in their heavenly course; and which, by St. Paul in Phillipians II, 13, is thus expressed. "It is God "who worketh in you both to will and to do of his "good pleasure." This verse Macknight translates literally thus, "For it is God *who inwardly worketh* "in you, *from benevolence*, both to will and *work ef-* "*fectually*." In his note he thus remarks thereon. "According to the Arminians and *moderate* Calvinists, "the word translated *inwardly worketh*, does not in "this passage signify any *irresistible* operation of the "deity on the minds of men, but a moral influence "only." And "they likewise observe, that if God "inwardly worketh by any influence which is irresisti- "ble, there would be no occasion for exhorting men "strongly to work out their own salvation, since the "whole is done by God himself. Besides they think "the *inward working of God* in men, to will and to "work, without *impinging* on their freedom, may be "explained in the following manner. First, by the "operation of this spirit God gives them *enlightened*

"eyes of *the understanding*, Ephesians 1, 18; where-
"by they are enabled to discern the truth of the doc-
"trines and promises of the gospel, and to perceive
"the beauty of virtue and deformity (or viciousness)
"of vice, and to form just notions of the consequen-
"ces of the one, and of the other. Secondly. He oc-
"casions these just views of things to recur frequent-
"ly, and with such force as to engage their attention:
"The consequence of which is, that the love of virtue
"and the hatred of vice being gradually inspired, those
"pleasures of the present life, which cannot be enjoy-
"ed with innocence, are despised by those in whom
"God thus worketh. Also such an earnest desire of
"the happiness of the life to come, is excited in them,
"as leads them to a virtuous conduct. Thirdly.
"When men are in danger of falling into sin through
"strong temptation, the spirit of God, by rousing their
"conscience, restrains them. Or, if they fall into sin,
"the spirit of God brings them to repent, by the con-
"demnations and painful stingings of their own con-
"science. Fourthly. Every circumstance of men's
"lot being ordered by God, he thus suits their trials
"to their strength, or he gives them assistance in pro-
"portion to the greatness of their trials; so that he
"never suffers men to be tempted above what they
"are able to bear." The above observations and rea-
sonings tend strikingly to illustrate how the divine
spirit may efficiently operate in christians to will and to
do, without at all infringing on their freedom in self
exertion; and without the smallest implication of dis-
ability in men, to originate their own volitions, inde-

pendently of *controling* excitement. The relation which exists betwixt divine internal agency, and human agency is further exemplified "From what God "hath said concerning the antediluvians. Genesis VI, "3. *My spirit shall not always strive with men.* "And from the apostles command, not to *quench the* "*spirit*, nor to *grieve him;* for these things imply "that the operations of the spirit of God may be re-"sisted." And hence it follows that man has a self determining power in things pertaining to his salvation; unless we admit the impious absurdity of two opposite divine influences, one weak, and the other strong; both operating at the same time.

This correspondency betwixt divine and human coaction, or rather of divine moral excitement, and human ability of moral action, may strikingly be further illustrated by the natural operation of the Microscope, and the Telescope on the human eye: And by the natural ability of man to use, or to reject either, or both of these instruments of vision. Objects hitherto invisible, are rendered visible by either instrument. It is not the microscope that distinctly surveys the nice organization of the animalcule; nor the telescope that discerns Herschel and his satellites, or the broad ring of Saturn. But it is the *eye*, which through these mediums, conveys knowledge to the human soul. The heart and mind may be affected with wonder, and astonishment, at these discoveries to the *self seeing eye*, and yet the man remain altogether unnecessitated, to use, or to forbear the use of these mediums of vision. Just so it is with man divinely influenced. It is God

who reveals; it is man who discovers. God imparts power, man exerts, or forbears exerting the power of action imparted. The eye that perceived the hidden wonders of nature, is still but an eye; although the soul therewith connected, hath increased its stock of knowledge: So the divinely illuminated man is still but a man, of like passions with other men; but with this difference, that if unfaithful to the heavenly operation, he is a man far more guilty than before; but if perseveringly faithful to the divine calling, his affections will freely ascend from creatures, in supreme love, to the adorable creator. It may be objected, that the comparison is imperfect because vision through the forementioned instruments, cannot be obstruded upon men; whilst deity has it ever in his power to compel men to see spiritual things, whether they will or not, and that in this very way he actually, graciously constrains all who are saved, to become willing in the day of his power. That the deity, if he pleased, could overwhelm the moral agency of devils and men by such irresistible influence as should fix them forever unalterably obedient to his requirements, no person will deny; but then all this must be done at the expense of their freedom, and accountability. Such an operation as this, if universal, would reduce all descriptions of intelligent beings into the condition of mere cogitating machines. Had this been the divine economy from the beginning, satan had never fallen, angels had never sinned, Adam and Eve had not transgressed, nor any of their posterity rebelled. The unsinning angels would have had no opportunity of

displaying their constancy of unnecessitated obedience to that God whom they adored. Neither could there have been any place for redemption, in the "sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." But the whole creation whether mental or material, had moved on together in the *passiveness* of machinery, under the necessitating impetus of Almighty power. If then we may infer the divine government over intelligent beings in ages to come, from those which are past, we may safely conclude, that all must commence their existence in a state of probation, that is, in a condition of perilous freedom. And that this is the present real condition of men in this life, (although clearly manifest from preceding trains of reasoning, and observations which are undeniable; yet) will still more fully appear if we but attend further to the agency on man, through divine illumination.

In order to the visual perception of objects, neither an eye nor an optical instrument, nor yet both united, are *alone* sufficient, it is *essential* that *light* should be present. Hence it is, that spiritual light, in order to the right discernment of heavenly things, is so frequently noticed in the holy scriptures. "Walk (saith "Christ) while ye have the light, lest darkness come "upon you; for he that walketh in darkness, knoweth "not whether he goeth. While ye have light, believe "in the light, that ye may be the children of light." John xii, 35, 36. And, saith St. Paul, "Call to re-"membrance the former days, in which, after ye were "*illuminated*, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." Hebrews x, 32. From Christ's words, we here learn

that divine light might be neglected and lost. And from Paul's, that a faithful use of divine illumination as to spiritual good, elevated the soul into a noble endurance of manifold wrongs. This light, cherished by obedience to its teachings, leads on to holiness, to happiness, and to God; and is a good, not limited to a few, but designed for the advantage of the world. For, saith the redeemer, "I am the light of the world, "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but "shall have the *light* of *life*." John VIII, 12. "For "in him was *life*, and the *life* was the light of men." "And he was the true light, that enlighteneth every "man that cometh into the world." Chapter I, 5, 9. This light of Christ, the Son of righteousness, like the light of the material sun, shines into every man, in every clime, imparting spiritual life to all who cordially receive it, with penitent believing hearts, and live conformably to its instructions. But the rejection of it, is the *sole* cause of their perdition. "For this is the con-"demnation, that *light* is come into the world, but "men loved darkness rather than light, because "their deeds were evil." John III, 19. This agency on the heart of man, by the divine illumination of his mind and conscience, is an agency efficient unto salvation, unto all who walk in the light thereof. "For "God who commanded the light to shine out of dark-"ness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of "the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of "Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians, IV, 6. But though efficient, yet not irresistible. For the heathens through self corruption, rendered it ineffectual, as St. Paul

proves at large, in the first chapter to the Romans, and as hath been already noted. And, that it is resistible even in the very highest degree, in which it is ever conferred on men, is undeniably evident, from Hebrews VI, 4, 5, 6. "For it is impossible for those who "were once *enlightened*, and have tasted of the heav- "enly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, "and have tasted the good word of God, and the pow- "ers of the world to come, *And yet have fallen* "*away*, (Macknight) to renew them again unto re- "pentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son "of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." And were there no other evidence in the divine word, that mankind are not saved by irresistible divine agency, this *alone* is sufficient. For this *impossibility* of renewal again unto repentance, refers *not* to inability of irresistible influence; but to that which *may*, and *hath been* resisted. Deity could compel, were compulsion the method of divine choice; but disapproving of compulsion with any, therefore, where agency of the highest degree divinely admissible, is conferred and resisted; salvation of course becomes impossible.

Finally, from the preceding train of reasoning and discussion, it clearly and indubitably follows, that man possesses not merely ability of self exertion, but *also* of self determination in the exercises of his own will. The antediluvians gave evidence thereof, by sinful volitions in opposition to the strivings of the divine spirit. Unfaithful christians evince it in every volition which grieves, or quenches the divine spirit. The unbelieving Jews in the wilderness evinced it, when rebel-

ling against God, they "vexed his holy spirit." Isaiah 63, 10. The persecuting unbelievers of Jerusalem, exercised a self determined opposition, when "they resisted the Holy Ghost," as their father's had before done. Acts VII, 51. The self corrupted Gentiles, yield like evidence of self originated opposition to God. Romans I, 19, 20, 21. And yet above all others the *apostates* demonstrate it, who did "*despite unto the spirit of grace.*" Hebrews x, 29. So that as to evidence arising from well authenticated facts, it is difficult to find any more powerful, than *this*, which here presents itself, of a power of self resistance in man; that he not only may, but unhappily too often does exert, to the *resisting*, *grieving*, *quenching*, and even doing *despite* to the *spirit* of *grace*, and thereby most miserably *causing* and *effecting* his own destruction.

But as self determining power in man, over his own acts of will if admitted, would wholly subvert *necessary volition;* which constitutes the fundamental principle of Hopkinsianism; the foregoing evidence and reasoning, however full and conclusive, will doubtless avail but little, with minds more disposed *to doubt* and *to cavil*, than to admit of argument however powerful, if hostile to the favourite creed: It therefore should not be deemed strange to hear that human self determination of volition, is but an absurd notion, because that if men even possess self power to will, still they are destitute of self determination how to will; for mere ability to will can never be a cause why a man in exerting his will should choose and not refuse, or refuse and not choose. That this cause if not

an immediate divine excitement on the heart, yet is from divine necessity, because, from a moral irresistible disposition, either *good* or *evil*, implanted in man by the forming hand of God himself. And that Christ's own doctrine strictly agrees herewith, "Make "the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the "tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is "known by his fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth "evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth "good fruit." Matthew XII, 33, and VII, 18. And hence, it will by Hopkinsians be deemed inferable, that neither a good man, nor a bad man, if left wholly to his own determinations, could ever change from his first moral character. The good man, would undeviatingly always act rightly, and the bad man, with equal uniformity, always act wrongly. But, as we assuredly know, that Adam and Eve were holy at first, and yet, afterwards became unholy: and as we are equally assured, that multitudes of their posterity, though undeniably sinful, do afterwards become pious and righteous; of course we have herefrom, undeniable proof, that neither our first parents, nor their posterity, were ever left to exercise a self determining power over their own wills, (even if they ever possessed any such power,) but were invariably governed by an invisible necessity, wholly independent of themselves, and of their wills: and to suppose any thing contrary to this, is but the *height* of folly and absurdity.

Amongst the difficulties attendant on this controversy and involving themselves therewith through every stage of it, is that of ambiguity of words, which

by perplexing the understanding, but too often undesignedly misleads, upon each side of the question. In the objections, arguments and inferences, now to be duly noted, the compound term "*self determination*," is seen frequently to occur. In order, therefore, to reply with precision to what may be deemed the very *marrow* of objection against true *freedom* of will, and in favour of *necessity* of will, it is highly expedient that its *true* and *undeviating* sense be distinctly understood and remembered. As heretofore explained when applied to human volition, it was so used, as to be synonymous with men's being the efficients of their own volitions; or, as originating their own acts of will, or otherwise expressed, as holding in themselves the control over their own wills. So that power of self determination does not mean the will determining or governing itself, as if it were an agent distinct from the man. Nor yet, that the man produces one act of will by a previous act of will: But simply, that a man has ability of free will to choose or to refuse *one* of two objects, or to refuse *both* and choose a *third*, if presented before him; independently of any necessitating, extrinsick agency: although not independently of that divine agency, which at first created and conferred on him his existence and ability; and which still upholds him in being, and on whom he is also further dependent, for the moral influence of motives, of hope and fear, and for the further moral influence of resistible divine illumination, and its gracious energies.

This is the *ability* or *freedom* of will for which we contend, as indispensably essential in order to account-

ability of character and conduct. It remains now to examine the forementioned *objections* and arguments against it.

First. It is objected to, as absurd on the ground of implying an effect without a cause, "for mere abil-"ity to will, can never be a *cause* why a man or any "other moral agent, in any given case, should choose "and not refuse, or refuse and not choose." In testing this objection, we will select the case of Eve. She had before her the fruit of the tree of knowledge. As a dissuasive, she had the authoritative commandment of abstinence therefrom, and the awful threatening of death, from the mouth of her almighty Creator. To this stood opposed the incentive speech of the seducer, aided by the appearance of the alluring but forbidden object itself. For "the woman saw that the "tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to "the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise." Genesis III, 6. Thus circumstanced and under the impressions of these various motives, during the absence of Adam, it was that Eve sinned. Here occur, and arise into view, these all important *questions;* did Eve *will*, *consent*, or choose, to eat of the forbidden fruit, under the influence of an irresistible necessity? Or *freely*, and consequently *independently* of all such necessity? Was her will *governed* by herself, as well as *exerted* by herself alone? Was she endued with equal ability to *refuse*, as to choose: or could she have suspended both choice, and refusal, until she had seen and conferred with Adam? Was her guilty choice the *effect* of a sinful propension originally created in

her? or was this criminal volition produced by an immediate "interposition of the supreme first cause?" Shall we transfer to the case of the wife what a great divine hath written concerning the transgression of her husband, in the following quotation; "It is in vain to "attempt to account for the first sin of the first man, "by the instrumentality of second causes. And un- "til we are willing to admit the interposition of the "*supreme first cause*, we must be content to consid- "er the fall of Adam as an unfathomable mystery."* But as it was a prudential duty incumbent on Eve, to have consulted with Adam after she had begun to doubt, before she dared to proceed; we, therefore, admonished by her precipitancy and rash determination, will forbear ascribing an *agency of depravation* to God; and seek the solution of this *mystery*, the fall of Eve, from that great and divinely illumined casuist the apostle James. "Let no man say when "he is tempted, I am tempted of God: For God can- "not be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any "man: But every man is tempted, when he is *drawn* "*away* of his *own lust*, and *enticed*. Then when "lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin "when it is finished, bringeth forth death." The pretended unfathomable mystery of the first sin of our first parents is here clearly revealed to every candid, discerning and reflecting mind. For such person comprehending the full meaning of the apostle, will perceive that the terms used by him, "no man," "a-

* Emmon's sermon on Ecclesiastes VII, 29, pages 292, 293.

ny man," and "every man," being without limitation, are universal, comprehensive of woman as well as of man, and of Adam and Eve, as *really* as of their posterity. Such will likewise perceive that the expression "*tempted*," in the sense used here, has a meaning different from its usual acceptation, for generally it signifies only a solicitation to evil, but here it means more, even that *energy* which renders the solicitation efficacious: and that this is the true construction, is undeniable from this apostle's own words; "Every man is tempted, when he is *drawn away*." In this sense of the term Christ never was tempted, because never *drawn away:* but in its usual meaning he was tempted in all points even as we are, although the temptations found no place in him. Again, those who pay strict attention to this passage will discover, that the reason, brought into view by the apostle, for God's not tempting his creatures to sin, is, the immutability of the divine perfections, rendering the seduction or excitation to evil *impossible* to the divine nature itself: and consequently, alike impossible that such an holy Being should in any way be accessary, directly or indirectly, to the perversion of his creatures; such seductive agency being possible only to mutable and corrupt beings. And still further, it will incontrovertibly appear, that the energy rendering temptation efficacious, exists in, and appertains only to the person who sins: and consists in *desire*, termed by the apostle "own lust."

Lastly. To all duly attentive, it will from St. Jame's expressions "*drawn away* and *enticed*," most

fully appear, that the seductive perversion through temptation, is not by any extrinsick necessitating influence; whether of motives in view, overwhelming ability of moral resistence; nor yet by any invisible exciting impetus, governing the man by the will of another agent, distinct from the man himself. But that all extrinsick influence is by *enticement*, consequently accommodated to man's *agency* of *consent*, and that all internal governing energy is from the man himself, who *drawn* by his *own lust*, or involuntary desire, yields by a *self exertion* of his *own will* to the *embraces* of his *own desire*, by which union of will and desire that *sin* is engendered, which, when finished, bringeth forth death.

Thus instructed we return to Eve, whom we have seen assailed by the insidious lie of the subtle seducer, allured by the fruit of that tree which she saw was good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and desirable to make one wise, but admonished to forbearance, by the injunction of her almighty Creator, threatening her with death in the day of transgression: and thus circumstanced we behold her perpetrate the *deed* forbidden.

But when we examine this event, by St. Jame's doctrine of self seduction to sin, we can discover no possibility for the admission of any "interposition of the supreme first cause" as producing it: but most clearly perceive such insinuation expressly denied and refuted as a doctrine false and detestable: whilst we are taught to look only into Eve's own heart and mind for the sole cause of her transgression. And

thus examining, we discover her under no necessity of sinning; but through the dictates and remonstrances of conscience, through natural love of life, and through her love to God, endued with ample ability to have resisted temptation, and to have retained her innocency: But hesitating when she should have repelled the tempter; she doubted God, she believed the serpent, she admitted errour, which darkening her understanding, and grieving the divine spirit, thereby diminished the due influence of motives to obedience, and consequently augmented the contrary influence: and still continuing irresolute, spiritual affection declined, sensual and emulative propension increased: conscience indeed remonstrated, but emulation *hankering* after the forbidden mean of knowledge, *mutable* Eve *drawn* thereby, at length surrendered her *will* to the "*embraces*" of the "*harlot*," *animal and emulative desire.* Daringly she now plucks the fruit forbidden, and presumptuously eating thereof, becomes self ruined, and a prey to death.

From the preceding authoritative decision of St. James, we have demonstrative evidence, that Eve's transgression is not in anywise to be attributed to any "Interposition of the *supreme first cause;*" the immutability of the divine nature and perfections rendering all such depraving influence wholly impossible; and as we are otherwise assured that she was originally created pure, and holy, and consequently free from all sinful propension; and as satan possessed no irresistible influence over her will, the inevitable consequence therefore, is, that in respect of causation, her sin and

fall were wholly of herself, through the conjunction of her will, with her *desire* or "*lust*," after the forbidden fruit.

Adam's offence, although not through deception, as Eve's was, yet like her's it was through allurement; not indeed *merely* the allurement of enticing fruit, or the fascination of becoming wise as a god; but more especially by an attraction transcending all others in congeniality to the weakness of peccable man in his probationary condition. "The *woman* that was given to be with him, she gave him of the tree, and he did eat." This transgression, so calamitous to him, and to all his posterity, could be effected only by the union of his will with the subordinate affections of his soul; and to which stood opposed the higher powers, and better affections of his nature: For he distinctly understood his duty. His conscience was tenderly alive to right and wrong, and being created in the moral, as well as in the intellectual image of God; he of course loved his infinitely blessed Creator, with the supreme affections of his heart; thus endowed with righteousness and true holiness, had he but watched unto prayer, confiding in divine power and goodness, he might forever have retained his innocency, and his integrity. But he had also an *animal* nature, with its propensions and passions. He *loved creatures*, and he loved Eve, above all other creatures; bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, endued with speech, rational, and social, and beholding her adorned with every external grace, his soul truly delighted in her. This only possible rival to his Creator in his affections, he

beheld suddenly changed in her relation to himself; raised by superiour knowledge to hold rank with a god, or doomed to mortality and death, by the God whom she had offended. A conflict of passions before unknown, now arose within his heart. Angelick and animal nature, flesh and spirit, love to creature and creator, contended for the decision of *will* on their respective sides. But so indubitably just were the demands of reason, of conscience, and of the sublimer affections, that hesitancy betokened an undue influence of fond affection. The *temptress* was listened to. The divine spirit was grieved; and conscience resisted, until at length, prefering the creature to the Creator, he formed the fatal resolution, with Eve, to soar into regions of forbidden knowledge, or with her to die guilty, rather than innocently to live without her; and therefore, rashly ate of that fruit, which she presented to him.

From these combined views, thus evangelically authorised by the apostle James, of the *self perversion*, and *apostacy* of our first parents; we clearly discover the true meaning of the before cited words of Christ, viz. that "A good tree, cannot bring forth evil fruit." For both Adam and Eve, in exerting those acts of will, by which each, bore evil fruit, they also each respectively, by those very acts of volition, depraved and corrupted their own nature; so that these moral trees, however good before (they brought forth this evil fruit,) were now good *no longer*, but both *trees* and *fruit* were *alike evil*. And hence, we can account for the fall and corruption of the sinning angels;

for the depravity of Adam's posterity, who, by personal transgression, forfeit the innocency and rectitude of infancy. And for the degeneracy of apostate christians, these latter, once branches in the *true vine*, having become unfruitful, are the "*trees*, whose fruit *withereth*," "without fruit," "twice dead," (once before, and once after regeneration,) "plucked up by the roots." John xv, 1, 6. Jude 12. And these through self perversion, are now become fit only, for the ax of judgment, and for that fire which is unquenchable.

Secondly. We hence learn the great expediency of urging upon men, to "Make the tree good, that its fruit may be good;" because, as the higher or converting attainments of grace may be fallen from by disobedience; so the lower manifestations thereof, may be frustrated by impenitency and unbelief.

Thirdly. Herefrom we have irrefragable evidence, that mankind are endued with a controling power over their own wills. Adam and Eve possessed and abused it. Their posterity from generation to generation possess and abuse it. Apostates possess and pervert it to their destruction. And to these we may add, the no less powerful, though more pleasing proofs of its existence in humbled penitents, and in faithful believers, when they practice painful self denials, and when with becoming fidelity they take up and bear their daily cross.

Were further proofs requisite we might appeal to that internal consciousness implanted in the minds of all men, by which they feel assured that they themselves do individually possess and exercise a govern-

ing power over their own choice or refusal. We might further substantiate this power, by pressing its existence as being necessarily implied and involved in that *constitution* of *nature*, by which man was formed in the *image* of his Creator. And in addition to all this, we might urge the consequences, of the destitution of such power, as being utterly subversive of every just principle of moral agency and accountability, and as being wholly incompatible with every scriptural and rational idea of an approaching judgment day, and its righteous retributions. But it is unnecessary to crowd further proofs, where an overwhelming body of evidence hath already established a fact; the denial of which constitutes an absurdity no less glaring than the wildest imaginations of the most visionary theorists. And yet it may not be foreign from, or uninteresting to this subject, to close it, by observing, that those persons who deny to mankind, the ability of controling their own acts of will, *do*, by this very denial, exhibit strong presumptive evidence, of the very thing they wish to overthrow, because their pertinacious dissent, (in despite of such indubitable combined proof,) from the good sense and right reason of the universe, affords much reason to apprehend that their judgment in this particular, is governed, as much by their *own self determined wills*, as by all other causes whatsoever.

Disinterested benevolence, and other Hopkinsian speculations, cn the essence of love, will be noted in my next.

LETTER XIV.

SIR,

DOUBTLESS you need not to be informed that "disinterested *love*" is a plant, not indigenous to the clime and soil of New-England, but of exotick origin. It was first discovered at Rome, by Michael de Molinos, a Spanish Priest, who in 1681, there made his discovery publick. Maria Bouviers de la Mothe Guyon, "the female apostle of mysticism," transplanted it to France, where Francis Salignac de Fenelon, Arch-Bishop of Cambray, nurtured and propagated it with success, in his eloquent and much admired writings. Mosheim defines it to have consisted in "such "a pure and disinterested love of the supreme being "as is exempt from all views of interest, and all hope "of reward." And Maclaine thus comments thereon. "This doctrine of the mystics, has for a foundation, "that the moral perfections of the deity, are in themselves, *intrinsically amiable;* therefore, that their "*excellence* is as much adapted to excite our esteem "and love, as the experience of their beneficent effects "is to inflame our gratitude. Consequently, the error lay in drawing extravagant conclusions from a "right principle; thereby abstracting and separating "ideas, intimately connected together, such as *felicity* "and *perfection*, &c. Also in their views of deity, "they overlooked the relations he bears to us as *benefactor* and *rewarder:* Relations which give rise to "noble sentiments and important duties." Edwards

having volunteered in defence of a *system*, which under the pretext of securing the greatest possible degree of happiness, which can exist, foreordains, to one portion of mankind, called the *elect*, eternal felicity and honour, independently of regard to merit or demerit; and assigns to the other, and far greater portion of mankind, called *reprobates*, unavoidable and endless infamy and misery, without any previous respect to their ill deservings; thereby designedly sacrificing the eternal well being of the latter, for the advancement of the felicity of the former; and for other purposes of a like *selfish* nature.

Such being the *creed* which this great man had adopted, it became expedient to incorporate therewith, some ingredient, which, serving as a palliative, might accommodate the necessary potions of its gall and wormwood to the palates of his nauseated pupils. Happily for him at this juncture, he discovered in the writings of the Mysticks, the "*disinterested love*," above mentioned, and speedily incorporated it with his system. It not only answered his highest expectations, but transcended them. To the disgusted pupils, the conserve of the "*intrinsical amiableness* of the divine character," was administered with surprising efficacy. To this ingenious artist, (aided as heretofore observed, by his friend Bellamy,) this new principle of disinterested love, afforded materials for the construction of the mirrour, "Love of being in general," into which the supposed elected few, looking, discovered therein such prodigies of *distinguishing*

love, that in extacies, they would rapturously exclaim, why me? Why me? Why me? &c. &c.

And thus, confident of assured salvation to themselves, they would often in their selfish ravings, fancy themselves willing to be damned to advance the divine glory.*

As for the *non* elect, they also were served with due apportionments of the *mystic love*. For it was enjoined upon them as a thing, right, and reasonable, fit, and becoming, to love that being, who did not love them, to seek his glory, who was utterly regardless of their future happiness, to honour him, who had created, and still upheld their being, *only* to render them, for the display of his sovereignty, *vessels* of *wrath*, and of *eternal dishonour*. With these and such like *hardening*, *blinding*, and *stupifying* potions, the repro-

* How truly surprising is it, that the understanding of any man should thus become so blinded, as ever to imagine, that a willingness to endure the punishment, which awaits the finally impenitent, should be an essential pre-requisite qualification, in order to the attainment of eternal life. For, as the punishment of the future state of retribution, is reserved *only* for those who, continuing in obstinate rebellion against God, wilfully reject the overtures of divine mercy, through Christ: Therefore, a willingness to undergo that punishment, involves also a willingness to be, and to continue to be, eternally the enemies of God, and of all righteousness. So that a willingness to be damned is so *far* from constituting a meetness for Heaven, that it indicates the *very* disposition of heart, which constitutes a meetness for the place of torments: And the more willing any man is, to endure this wrath to come, the more evidence he affords of a probable future attainment of this object of his wishes.

bates were to be furnished, to render them furious or quiescent, as the several doses might happen to operate; for the *manner* of operation was a thing wholly indifferent, because however it might be, still but one end could result therefrom, viz. the eternal perdition of the *disbeloved* reprobate.

Hopkins, delighted with these improvements, on the new fangled principle of the Spanish Priest at Rome, and of the French mystics; and supposing it to contain the essence of all moral obligation, and all excellency of moral character, thence devised a new rule of moral direction, as comprehensive of every duty. For he says, "Holiness, in the scripture, is reduced to "the *one simple principle love*, by which is meant *dis-* "*interested*, good will to being in general, capable of "happiness." "The person who exercises a disin- "terested good will to *being in general*, must have a "proper and proportionable regard to himself, as he is "included in it as a necessary part of it. And the "more he has of a *disinterested, universal benevolence*, "the more fervently will he desire and seek his *own* "interest and happiness." (Hopkins.)

From these great inconsistencies, it would seem, that some parts of the system of this celebrated innovator, were the production of faculties far advanced towards the imbecility of dotage; for if otherwise, wherefore did he presume to consolidate into *one*, what Christ had divinely separated into *two*? Christ expressly distinguished betwixt *love* of man to his *Creator*, and *love* of man to his *fellow creature*. "Jesus "said unto him. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God

"with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with "all thy mind. This is the first and great command-"ment. And the second is like unto it. Thou shalt "love thy neighbour as thyself."

But Dr. Hopkin's divinity says, "*Thou shalt love being in general with disinterested benevolence.*" What has *benevolence* from *creatures* to do with *Deity?* "Can man be profitable unto God?" Or confer favours upon the Almighty? Benevolence is a communication of kindness from the *greater* to the *less.* From God it descends in multiplied forms to his dependent creatures, whose returns of love to him should *not* be that of benevolence, *but* of adoration, confidence and gratitude. Human benevolence can extend only to human kind, and to the creatures of inferiour natures, needing our compassion or our bounty; but *benevolence* to *general* or *universal being*, is a solecism but seldom equalled in the productions of the beardless stripling. And as benevolence from creature to Creator involves the very essence of absurdity; so the terms *disinterested benevolence*, you have, sir, in your Contrast, proved to be no less ridiculous; even "a benevolence in which the soul has no emotion of interest." And consequently, an affection cold as the wintery blasts from the frigid regions of the northern pole. The Hopkinsian *rule* prescribing a *proportionable* regard to a man's own interest and happiness, as an included part of universal being, your quotations from the writings of the Reverend Robert Hall, have well exposed to be utterly vague, and wholly impracticable; because no man can ever

ascertain what weight he personally bears in the scale of existencies, capable of happiness or misery.

But there remains another absurdity in this doctrine, which neither you, nor the above ingenious writer have noticed; for Dr. Hopkins asserts, that "the more a man has of disinterested universal benevolence, the more fervently he will desire and seek his *own* interest and happiness." And else where he also asserts, that "love actuated the Deity in all his *decrees*, "and he will save as *many* as he possibly can, con- "sistently with his regard to the publick or greatest "good," which requires "the decree of reprobation, "consisting in God's ordaining a definite number to "the possession of a reprobate character, and the pun- "ishment which is both meet for them, and suitable "to display the divine justice." This subject in whatsoever manner fairly and candidly viewed, will afford no other result, but that of absurdity and contradiction. If the persons professing thus to exercise love to *being in general*, are the *elect*, their love is not *disinterested* love, but is love of a truly *selfish* nature; for according to Hopkinsianism they belong to that favoured portion of being in general, which exclusively enjoys the whole benefit of this scheme of *interest* and monopolized felicity. If, on the other hand, the reprobate portion fall in with this scheme of discrimination, and prefering the felicity of others, to their own happiness, they thereby become ardent lovers of *being in general;* then here follows another contradiction, because, according to Hopkinsianism, their reprobate character becomes changed, as none but the elect can

so love *being in general.* And consequently, from the whole it follows, that no such love can possibly exist amongst men, unless there is amongst them another description of persons, besides *elect* and *reprobates.* But as Hopkinsianism admits of no such description, therefore on their own principles, disinterested love to *being* in general can never exist; because love to being in general, from the only *benefited* and *interested* part of this being in general, is nothing but mere pretence and *real selfishness;* and because all such love from reprobates is wholly impossible.

But we will pursue this subject still further. Hopkinsianism considers the *reprobate character*, viz. *necessitated personal sinfulness*, as indispensably essential to the "greatest, or publick good." But under such circumstances, how could it be ever either just or reasonable, to require of any persons to love that publick or general good, which required of them private and personal wickedness; unless, at the same time, it could also be just and reasonable to delight in, and love their own private and personal wickedness? And if righteous in loving private and personal unrighteousness in themselves, for the promotion of the publick good; then it would be perfectly unjust to punish them, because the publick righteousness of their *disinterested* affection and conduct, would produce, according to this scheme, a far greater *publick* good to *being in general*, than their private unrighteousness would a private and partial evil. So that if at all rewarded for necessitated private sinfulness and unrighteousness, happiness must be conferred on them,

because their publick goodness and virtuousness of character and conduct, must preponderate over their private demerit.

Such, sir, are the results from this "love of being in general." But as it is designed to contest these points rather with the living than with the dead, we will, for the present, bid adieu to the well meaning but mistaken men, who first systemized these tenets; and animadvert on them, as now under the finishing hand of the modern apostle of the Hopkinsian sect.

This distinguished leader retains indeed the gross absurdities of "disinterested benevolence," in the abstract sense of the terms, and of "disinterested love to being in general;" but endeavours to conceal their glaring inconsistencies, by artfully representing love in all other forms, as being but *mere selfishness*, and as constituting the *very essence* of total depravity. His fallacies upon this point I shall, however, reserve for the next letter, and conclude this by remarking on others of a different description.

Two leading and favourite points with the doctor are, *inertness* of mind, and a universal and total *moral inability* in every man by nature. Opposed to the latter of these tenets, stands every argument that can arise in vindication of *natural* religion, as distinguishable from revealed religion. And opposed to both the former and the latter tenet, are the sentiments of such writers as assert a moral *sense* or *taste* to be discoverable in human nature. A *moral taste*, or *relish*, in the human soul, as well as a perception of the nature of justice, truth, sincerity and veneration for the Di-

vine character and attributes, is by such writers, considered as self evident.*

In defence of the forementioned favourite points, and in opposition to arguments and principles hostile thereunto, he thus remarks, viz. "If we turn our attention inwardly, and examine the operations of our "own *minds*, we shall be convinced that *love* is some-"thing very different from either perception, reason or "conscience. These are *natural* faculties, which do "their office independently of the will."§ The doctor here prefers an appeal to the operations of the *mind*, *rather* than to those of the *soul*. And the reason is obvious, viz. because the former is much more favourable to his notions of *inertness*, than the latter; for though he might be able to persuade some readers, that *mind* is as incapable of self action, as *matter* is of self motion, yet, it might be much more difficult to persuade them, that *souls* are in like manner, equally as incapable of self action. Mind and soul, however allied, yet, do not imply an *identity*. Soul and spirit are properly synonymous, being identically the same in respect to essence; but mind, although a faculty of this essence, and dependent thereon; yet, this spiritual essence or soul, is not in like manner dependent upon mind. If therefore, we will but duly look inwardly, and discriminate betwixt *mind* and *soul*, and their operations, we shall become able to discov-

* See more on this subject in note first, at the end of the letters.

§ Sermon xi, volume first, page 250.

er much more, than the doctor is willing we should perceive. For we shall thereby discover the soul, to be endued with other faculties, besides those of the mind. We shall perceive therein the distinct faculties of will, affections, and conscience; which latter faculty, St. Paul denominates "The work of the law written in the *heart*." (Romans II, 15.)

The doctor, in the last cited quotation from his works, denominates conscience a *natural* faculty; and this he did, probably, in opposition to what some call the "taste scheme," because any approbation of moral good, or disapprobation of moral evil, discovered to be innately inherent in the human heart, would amount to a *moral taste*, and consequently be greatly inimical to *his scheme* of a *total moral* depravity, innately inherent in all mankind. And therefore, although his system admits conscience to be endued with a *perception* and feeling of moral objects, yet, it necessarily excludes therefrom, all delight in moral goodness, and all disgust at evil of a moral nature. And hence, he is compelled to consider conscience *not* as a moral faculty, although essential to moral agency; and to view it only as on a par with the natural faculties of perception and reason. But can that faculty be only *natural*, and *not moral*, which the scriptures denominate "a *pure* conscience," a "*defiled* conscience," "an *evil* conscience," and "a conscience seared, as with an hot iron?"

And what the scripture thus so plainly teaches, experience amply corroborates. For how common is it to discover amongst mankind, persons who appear ut-

terly lost to every *feeling* of conscience, and yet they retain wholly unimpaired, the *really natural* faculties, of perception, reason, memory and imagination.

But to proceed, as the doctor thus endeavours to divest conscience of its moral essence, and to constitute it, a *mere natural* faculty of the mind, so, he likewise attempts to connect moral action, with every exercise of *natural* affection, because such exercise is in co-operation with the will, or as he elsewhere expresses it, is an *act of the heart*. "I appeal (he says,) to every "person, whether he is conscious of ever acting, from "mere natural affections *without the heart*." "I ap- "peal to every person once more, whether he is not "conscious of often *acting contrary to natural affec-* "*tions?*" "If natural affection dictate to a man to "give a beloved child the largest portion of his in- "heritance; his *natural* affection is not the *principle* "of action, but his *heart*, which acts agreeably to his "natural affection." "And if all actions flow from "the heart, then either all the actions of sinners are "totally corrupt, or none of them." The tendency of this method of reasoning and inference, is, to impose an absurdity on the mind of the reader, by insinuating that though *natural* affection *is not moral* affection, yet, that all actions dictated by natural affections are moral actions, because the *heart* is concerned in all such actions. To detect this imposing fallacy, needs only this reply, viz. As the heart is the *seat* of natural affection; even as the *brain* is the *seat* of reason; so it is as unphilosophical to talk of natural affection, acting separately from the heart, as it would be of rea-

son, acting separately from the brain: And therefore, we may, with equal consistency, maintain that *reason* is not the *principle* which compares or infers, but the *brain*, as that natural affection is not the principle of action, but the heart. Because the truth in both cases *is*, that the real principle of action, is neither the brain, nor the heart; but the *soul* or *living spirit*, constituting the man.

The doctor still contending against the *taste scheme*, and endeavouring to invalidate all ideas of a *moral taste* in man, proceeds. "It depends upon our perception, "not upon our will, whether an object shall appear "either black or white. It depends upon our reason, "not upon our will, whether a proposition shall ap- "pear either true or false. It depends upon our con- "science, not upon our will, whether an action shall "appear good or evil. But it depends *entirely* upon "our *choice*, whether we shall love either a white or a "black object, either a true or a false proposition, ei- "ther a good or an evil action. Hence, we intuitively "know, that *love* is a *free voluntary* affection, which "is entirely distinct from every natural faculty of the "*mind*." We have here a strange compound of truth and errour, of plausibility and of manifest inconsistency. The appearance of black or white, in an object, depends indeed altogether on visual perception; but liking or disliking either colour, does not depend wholly upon choice; for such choice would be, by an arbitrary act of will, wholly independent of all previous agreeableness, or disagreeableness, in the colour itself, as impressing our souls. All which idea of love, and

choice, is but an absurdity; for no man can possibly love an object which has no appearance of agreeableness therein; nor hate any, that has no appearance of hatefulness, connected therewith. Consequently, there is in the soul, an innate aversion or propension to objects, previously to volition. But he further teaches, that, "The appearance of the truth, or falsehood of a "proposition, depends wholly upon our reason, and "the appearance of the good, or evil of an action, "wholly upon our conscience." These assertions would be correct, if our hearts and minds were invariably candid, pure, and unprejudiced. But wicked men are ever unreasonable, and even good men are but too often weak, wilful and prejudiced; and such is the connection betwixt head and heart, that the disorders of the latter, will but too often, derange the operations of the former.

His ideas of the *essence* of *love* he thus explains. "All voluntary exercises belong to the heart; and "therefore, loving and hating is as really acting, as "choosing and refusing. It is true we sometimes "make a distinction among the exercises of the heart, "calling some *affections*, and others *volitions*. But "the only ground of this distinction is, that *affections* "are *immanent* exercises, which produce no external "effects; but *volitions* are *imperative* acts productive "of external effects." To avoid being seduced into errour by this quotation, we should bear in mind that neither *affection*, in the form of loving or hating, nor *will* in the exercise of volition, are real agents or efficients; but that the true agent, or real efficient, is the

soul itself, which, by means of these faculties of *affections* and *will*, produces such exercises and acts, as it by them respectively, is capable of producing. And in this view of the subject, we can discriminate betwixt the faculty, and the exercise of the faculty. For as the eye is distinct from the act of seeing, the ear from the act of hearing, and the hand from the act of handling—so the *heart* is distinct from its exercises. In each of these instances God confers the former, but man performs the latter. God bestows eyes to see, and we use or abuse them; and ears to hear, and we pervert, or use them with discretion. He creates our hands, and we apply them to proper or improper uses. And in like manner, he confers on us hearts, and we *exercise* them to his glory, or corrupt them to his dishonour, and to our own ruin.

But he proceeds: "Perception, reason and conscience, are all the *natural* faculties necessary to constitute a moral agent. These form a capacity for loving and hating, choosing and refusing, acting and forbearing to act." When *figs* shall grow on *thistles*, and *grapes* upon *thorns*, then, and not until then, we may expect to find *natural* faculties constitute *moral* capacity. And when men shall become able to obey that Egyptian tyranny, which would exact of them the making of bricks without means or materials, then we may apprehend that such a change is approaching, both in *nature* and *morals;* as, that perception, reason and conscience, may peradventure become capable of creating in half formed human souls, the still further faculties, essential to moral agents viz. The distinct,

and separate faculties, of *will* and *affections*, together with power over each.

But he still further proceeds, "It is God who "worketh in men both to will and to do." (He should have added, *of his good pleasure.*) "Moral exercises "flow from a divine operation upon the mind of a "moral agent, and not from any *natural faculty*, *prin-* "*ciple* or *taste*, enabling him to *originate* his own in- "ternal exercises, or external actions." That God operates both by his word and spirit, on human hearts and minds, in order to induce men to yield due obedience to his laws and gospel, is a doctrine, neither needing proof, nor admitting of denial. And that men but too commonly, both *resist* and *frustrate* this divine operation, is also a truth, as clearly and as indubitably established, both by scripture and experience, as the forementioned doctrine is, by all its weight of evidence. Had the doctor then, but attended duly to this latter fact, of resistence to divine operation, he would most clearly have discovered, not only that men can, but also, that in this case, they most assuredly do *originate their own internal exercises, and external actions.* And what he would thus have discovered actually to exist in this case, he would have perceived to be no less possible in innumerable other cases.

So, that from the whole view of this deeply interesting subject, we behold mankind, as moral agents, endowed with powers and faculties, rendering them awfully responsible. Possessed of the intellectual faculties of perception, reason, memory, and imagination, they are capable of scrutinizing things pres-

ent, of recollecting events past, and of anticipating others yet future. But whilst the head is thus furnished with indispensable pre-requisites, the heart in man is endowed also with its portion of moral powers, and principles of activity. For therein reside conscience, will, and the affections. Conscience, although there enthroned as *Judge*, is still *but a faculty*. The will, though active and powerfully vigorous, is *but a faculty*. And the affections and passions, although active, greatly influential, and often clamorous and domineering, are still *but faculties*. The soul or spirit, by reason of these, is capable of loving or hating, of hoping or fearing, and of desire and aversion. These energies of the heart, although branching out into manifold affections, yet may consistently be reduced into *propension*, *passion* and *habit*. Propension, duly understood, is affection *reposing*. Passion is affection *roused* and inflamed. And habit is but *propension overgrown*, through oft repeated indulgence of whatever passion. Had the doctor but duly contemplated these various and active powers of the human soul or spirit, which occupies both head and heart, and which pervading the whole body, properly constitutes the man; he would not, in seeking a principle of activity whereby to account for human affections and volitions, have been constrained to have had recourse in all cases, to an immediate, divine, positive, and exciting agency. For although he might not have been able to have discerned such ability for action, in any "*dormant faculty*, *taste*, or *inactive principle*;" yet most clearly he might have discovered it, in some one, or

more, of the several affections, and in one or other of their different states of *propension*, *passion* or *habit*.

And in this manifestly correct view of this important subject, we have without other proof, sufficient evidence in the effects of *habit* upon mankind, that the *affections* and passions, are essentially inherent in the soul itself; and consequently, that they are not *adventitious* things occasionally supplied by another being, wholly distinct from the man himself. For if a man were so governed by any other being, and if a *repetition of acts* were to form a *habit*, it could not be in the man, but in the being, so governing. In this case, impulse alone, and not habit would rule the man; whilst habit of so exciting, at length, would necessitate the ruling agent, to exert an unremitting impulse of excitement on the passive machine. Selfishness will be considered in my next.

LETTER XV.

SIR,

SELFISHNESS, or such a regard to one's *own* interest, as excludes all regard, for the interests of all other beings, is such a degree of depravity or self corruption, as is perhaps but rarely to be found amongst the descendants of Adam. A character perfectly the reverse of this, would imply therein such an attachment to the interests of others, as would utterly

preclude all regard whatsoever to the person's own welfare. But is a being of this description to be any where found? God is not such a being, for he "will not give his glory unto another." Isaiah XLII, 8. And yet "he is good unto all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Christ is not such a being, for though he gave his life a ransom for his enemies, yet it was "for the joy that was set before him (that he) endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Hebrews XII, 2. Noah, that perfect man, "moved with *fear*, prepared an ark to the saving of *his* house." Hebrews XI, 7. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, though sojourners, dwelling in tents, yet "sought a city, whose builder and maker is God." (XI, 10—16.) And Moses, though prefering the *reproach* of Christ to the *treasures* of Egypt, yet "had respect to the recompense of the reward." (Verse 26.) And in like manner St. Paul, and the New-Testament saints, "pressed toward the mark for the *prize* of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Phillippians III, 14, 15. 1 Corinthians, IX, 25, 26, 27.

Such disinterestedness then, as involves a total abandonment of all regard whatsoever to personal welfare, in view of the advancement of the exclusive interests of others, is a species of disinterestedness not to be found either in the Heavens above, or in the Earth beneath. And yet it is precisely this very disinterestedness of affection, that Hopkinsianism declares to be the law, immutably and eternally obligatory upon one portion of "being in general;" which, for the

sake of the exclusive advancement of the eternal glory and felicity of the other part of "being in general," is unconditionally and irrevocably, foredoomed to *unending sinfulness* and *torments*.

Should the glaring absurdity of such enjoined disregard to self felicity and interest, be considered as requiring a veil to cover its deformity, it will, perhaps, be replied, that "If God meant to display all his "goodness in creation, he was obliged to bring ob- "jects into being, upon whom he might display both "his justice and mercy." "The glory of God there- "fore required, that just such sinful creatures as man- "kind are should exist, that they might be both the "monuments of divine justice, and of divine grace." "It is for want of seeing this connection that so many "object. They imagine it derogatory to God to say, "that he makes his own glory his ultimate end. "They attach the idea of *selfishness* to this motive of "action. But if God cannot seek his own glory in "any other way than in displaying his *goodness;* then "to seek his own glory to the highest degree, is the "same thing as to give the highest expression of *uni-* "*versal* and *disinterested* benevolence." (Emmons.) That God makes the greatest display of his glory the ultimate end of his actions. That in so doing he gives the highest expression of *universal, purest* benevolence. That just such sinful creatures as mankind are, afford an opportunity for "more of the heart of God to be seen in the work of redemption, than in all his other works;" and that in punishing the impenitent, and in pardoning the humbled sinner, his

justice and mercy are most signally displayed, are truths admitting of no dispute, if but duly considered, and correctly understood. But when so considered and so understood, such view of the subject will subvert the Hopkinsian creed. For it will exclude all ideas of God's *vitiating* and *corrupting* the hearts of his creatures. It will admit mankind to be what they truly are, viz. The real efficients of their own volitions and actions. It will extend an *actual* possibility of salvation unto every man, through the mediation of the Saviour, and the operation of the divine spirit; and leaving all men unfettered by predestinating decrees, incompatible with that essential pre-requisite of accountability, viz. *moral ability to perform moral requisition;* it thereby will "give the highest expression of *universal* benevolence," by affording to *both parts* of "being in general," a *conditional* and *real*, though *not* equal opportunity of obtaining felicity. Such a view of this important subject, will illustrate the divine character, display the divine glory, exhibit the impenitent, self hardened sinner, as justly perishing through his own obstinate rejection of salvation by grace; and will exalt the compassion of the Saviour, into purest and universal benevolence. But the Hopkinsian creed impeaches the divine character, derogates from the philanthropy of the Saviour, consigns the *automaton* reprobate to undeserved misery, and devoting unconditionally to inevitable and eternal tortures, one part of "being in general," in order to enhance the eternal glory and felicity of the other part of "being in general;" it thereby affords ample demonstra-

tion of a scheme of benevolence founded only in *deception*, and altogether fraught with *real selfishness*.

As such benevolence as that, which excludes all regard for self welfare, exists only in the legends of mysticism; so were it possible really to exist, it would be no real virtue, but an actual vice, mutilating and destroying moral agency. For by exterminating hope and fear, desire and aversion, and such like passions, so far as they operate on a sensibility of personal welfare, it thereby would wholly frustrate the true design of the great sanctions of the law and the gospel.

To a man wholly insensible to personal suffering or enjoyment, threatenings will not prove alarming, nor promises inviting. Denounce the penalties of law, he fears not; proclaim the promises of the gospel, he neither desires nor hopes. Able to withstand "devouring fire," and to "dwell with everlasting burnings," he stands undismayed before that Being who can destroy both *body* and *soul* in *hell*. Purified from the tin and dross of regard to personal felicity; the splendour of the New-Jerusalem, the white robes of the conquerors, the resurrection of the bodies of the just, the fellowship of saints, the society of angels, the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the unveiled glories of Jehovah, are all unable to influence his "disinterested" heart, to exert a single volition, in choosing that good portion for *himself;* but with a disinterestedness cold as the marble statue, is ready to descend eternally into the lake burning with fire and brimstone, that another part of "being in general," more selfish

than himself, may escape these torments; and that, laying hold upon eternal life, this selfish part may reap the rich harvest of heavenly and eternal joys.

In respect to the egregious enormity of a discriminating regard to *self* or *personal welfare*, we are thus further informed. "Selfishness is all the evil heart, "that we ever find described in scripture, that we ev- "er see acted out, or that we ever feel in our own "breasts." "Selfishness is the essence of total de- "pravity, and constitutes the carnal mind, which is "enmity to God, to Christ, to his friends, and to all "true holiness." "Sinners love themselves, not be- "cause they are a *part* of the *intellectual system*, nor "because the general good requires them to regard "their personal happiness, *but because they are them- "selves.* They love their own interest, because it is "their *own*, in distinction from the interest of all other "created, or uncreated beings. Their interest is real- "ly no more valuable for being theirs, than if it be- "longed to others; and they themselves are no more "valuable, than other creatures of the same character "and capacity. To love themselves therefore because "they are themselves, is to love themselves, from a "motive *peculiar* to *selfish* creatures." (Emmons.)

Truly deceptive and fallacious sir, is this assertion that for beings, "To love themselves, because they "are themselves, is to love themselves from a motive "*peculiar* to *selfish* creatures." Aware of difficulty here, the doctor endeavoured to obviate it, by previously remarking, "Sinners love themselves. But "why? Not for the same reason that saints love

"themselves; if they did, they would be saints. Nor "do they love themselves from *mere instinct*, as the "lower species of animals do. But they love them- "selves, because they are themselves, which is neither "true love, nor a mere *animal* affection, but proper "*selfishness*." Whenever any man departs so far from the plain and sober dictates of nature, experience, and common sense, as that, in opposition to them all, he is necessitated to attempt to make absurdity consistency; he will discover finally, that he has undertaken as *real* an impossibility, as the man who should attempt to perform moral actions, when endued with *only natural ability* of action; or to perform *natural* actions, when only endued with *moral ability* of action. And such truly is the case of the doctor, in this labyrinth of inconsistency before us, in which he has so very unhappily involved himself. A man in "Loving himself, because he is himself, does not love himself, from *mere instinct*, as the lower species of animals do." A *man*, although of an higher species of animals, is nevertheless a real animal, and although endued with higher powers and affections, than the lower species of animals, yet, he possesses as really as they do, instinctive propensions, and natural affections. "For no man ever yet hated his *own flesh*; but nourisheth, and cherisheth it." Ephesians v, 29. This every man *instinctively* doth, as really as the inferiour animals do. And men being naturally endued with faculties, which admit of higher improvement, in ingenious contrivances, to promote personal welfare; so it is no more criminal in them to improve, and exert,

these higher faculties, thus productive of personal well being, than it is to yield to the natural cravings of hunger and thirst, requiring nourishment for the flesh; and is equally as befitting, as to yield to the *instinctive* impulse, which hurries us to seek a shelter from the driving storm. Nor is a man when regenerated, divested of instinctive influence, of the cravings of animal appetites, or of propension through excitement from natural affections. It is still his duty to nourish and cherish his own flesh, because it is his own flesh; to love himself, because he is himself. And as christian men ought to love their own bodies, because they are their own bodies. "So ought (these) men to love "their wives, as their own bodies; he that loveth his "wife, loveth himself." The christian if married, "shall leave his father and mother, and shall be joined "unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." And therefore, saith St. Paul, unto all such, "Let "every one of you in *particular*, so love his wife, "even as himself." Ephesians v, 28, 30, 33. Had St. Paul not received the doctrines which he taught, by a revelation from Christ, but learned them from the distinguished doctors, of the new divinity school, he very probably would have addressed the Ephesian believers, after this manner. "As selfishness is the es- "sence of total depravity, and constitutes the carnal "mind, which is enmity to God, to Christ, to his "friends, and to all true holiness; and as this evil "heart of selfishness consists in a man's loving him- "self, because he is himself; therefore, you must ev- "ery one of you, wholly divest himself of all such

"carnality. You must not nourish, nor cherish your "own flesh, more than you nourish and cherish another "man's flesh; for your body is really no more valuable "for being yours, than if it belonged to another per- "son, and that person's body is no more valuable, than "another's body, of the same character and capacity. "If therefore, you would be a saint, you must love "yourself and every thing belonging to yourself, as "saints do. That is you must love yourself, and ev- "ery person belonging to yourself, only because you "and they, are parts of the intellectual system; and "because the general good requires no discrimination "of *selfish* attachments. Therefore, you are not to love "your own wife in *particular*, because she is your "wife, for that would be from a motive peculiar to "selfish creatures. Neither are you to love your own "children, because they are your own; for they are "no more valuable because they are yours, than if "they were another's; you are indeed to love your "wives and children, as parts of intellectual being; "but as other men's wives and children, are *equally* "parts of intellectual being, you must utterly renounce "all discriminating partialities, which are but *mere* sel- "fishness; and love *all wives*, and *all children*, with "a universal love of disinterested benevolence."

Had such sublime and yet accommodating doctrines as these, appeared in the early ages of christianity, and appeared, as sanctioned by the signature of a Paul, the Nicolaitanes undoubtedly would have profited thereby, in their proposed establishment of a com-

munity of wives: even as the modern infidels have done, by the reveries of Molinos, and of his visionary followers on both sides of the Atlantick.

For beings to love themselves, because they are themselves, is to love with an affection, which is *inseparable* from individual existence of every species, possessed of *conscious* being. This love as primarily inherent, *is* a natural, and *not* a moral affection. Any being destitute of it would be imperfect in respect of *essential* natural endowments. It is upon this self evident truth, that the well known maxim applying equally to individuals and to nations, is securely founded, viz. "That *self preservation is* the *first law of nature.*" It will avail nothing to object that even the lower animals as well as mankind, often rise superiour to this *selfish* maxim, as exemplified in the male hazarding his life in defence of the female, and the female in defence of her young. That the hero jeopardizes his life for his country's welfare. And that both Moses and St. Paul rose superiour to every feeling and consideration of personal interest, for "Moses "valued his interest less than the interest of all the Is- "raelites; and Paul valued his salvation, less than the "salvation of his whole nation." (Emmons.) Such reasonings as these, are indeed but pitiful and trifling. The heroism of the male in defence of his mate, of the female in defence of her young, and of the valiant soldier in defence of his country, are all but diversified modifications of self love. For each jeopardizes personal safety for its *own*, and *not* for another mate, or anothers young, &c. And although Moses and Paul were

each stimulated by the purest benevolence, yet it was not in either, disinterested affection. When Moses tendered his life as a substitute for the lives of great transgressors, it was not for the Amorite, or Amalekite transgressors, but for the transgressors of *his own* nation: And when Paul was willing to be cut off from the visible church, *(not from salvation)* it was *not* for the unbelieving Gentiles, *but* for the unbelieving Jews, even for *his own* "*Brethren* and *kinsmen*, according to the *flesh*." Though both Moses and Paul were thus each endued with a portion of the spirit of the great mediator, yet neither of them attained to a disinterestedness, beyond that which actuated their divine master, who, in ransoming sinners, "Endured the cross, and despised the shame, *for the joy that was set before him*." Therefore, like him, but under him, each in seeking to promote sinners salvation, had *respect* to the *recompense* of the *reward* at the *resurrection* of the *just*.

Love correctly understood, is personal and relative. Personal love, is *self love*. Relative love, is that which extends to other beings. If love of one's self is sinful love, then God himself cannot be an holy being; for he has invariably from eternity, loved himself, because he was himself. And since time commenced, and creatures were formed, he has exercised relative love to all whom he has made. In each living being which he hath created, he hath implanted the natural affection of self love. But such, as he elevated to the responsibility of moral agency, he endued with ability to exercise relative love to himself, and to

his creatures. This was exemplified in the case of the angels in heaven, and in the condition of our first parents in the garden of Eden.

The unsinning angels duly regarding personal safety, wisely continued to yield the unceasing homage of relative perfect love to their infinitely and ever blessed creator. While others less circumspect, as well as our first parents, turning from the holy commandment given them, refused the just tribute of perfect love to God, and turning the free current of their supreme affections from their proper object; they became *sinfully* the lovers of the creature, and *selfishly* undue lovers of themselves to their own undoing.

Christ having opened a new and living way, of salvation and felicity to mankind, graciously adapts his gospel to their character and condition. Beholding sinners insensible of their misery and unapprized of their danger, whilst in a state of impenitency and unbelief; he powerfully addresses their understandings, their consciences, and their affections. He discovers to them reasonable views of duty; imparts to them a feeling sense of the enormity of transgression. And invites them to delight supremely in that God, who is infinite in all natural, moral, and possible excellency, and perfection. Is the soul unmoved by reason, unaffected by conscience, and uninfluenced by infinitely transcendant amiableness and excellency, he then, to save the *self corrupted* and *depraved* being from eternal misery, operates through every passion of the soul, on that *natural* love of *self*, or *unalienable regard* to *personal well being*, implanted by the hand

of the creator himself, not in man alone, but also, in every other creature endued with conscious existence. The sinner is alarmed by fear, invited by hope, roused through emulation, stimulated through desire. Death and its uncertainty, judgment and its awful appendages, hell and its horrours, and heaven and all its eternal glories, are, by the divine spirit, through the gospel, pourtrayed before the imagination, and impressed upon his mind, memory and conscience. Awakened at length to a due sense of danger, and of *true interest*, like the humbled publican he implores mercy. Like awakened Saul he prays. And like Israel fallen by his iniquity, he returns to the Lord. He "Takes words saying, take away all iniquity, receive me graciously, so will I render the calves of my lips." Having "drawn nigh to God, God draws nigh to him." His fetters are broken. His guilt is cancelled. "Christ is revealed in him." He now "calls Jesus Lord by the holy spirit." He now discovers how *self love*, and *relative love* accord together. Though he still loves himself, because he is himself, yet he loves God more, because God is himself. He discovers that the divine glory, is most exalted in the *salvation* and *safety* of the penitent sinner. He now likewise perceives, that whilst he ought, from the obligation of natural law, to love himself, because he is himself; so he ought, from the same law, (which is the foundation of the "law and prophets,") to love his neighbour as himself, for the *gospel law* of *love* to our neighbour, and the same *love* enjoined by the "law and prophets," he perceives do all, divinely grow out of the

natural law of *self love;* because the same principle of equity, which guarantees one man's natural rights and interests, must in like manner, guarantee every man's natural rights and interests; and from hence he discovers, originates that divine injunction, "all things "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do "ye even so to them." And hence also, that commandment, "Thou shalt not covet."

There is indeed sir, as you well know, no benevolence whatsoever enjoined in the gospel, which excludes all regard to personal interest. It is true St. Paul tells us, that "charity seeketh not her own;" and he commands us to exercise charity, "especially "in the precepts following. If thine enemy hunger, "feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. Be not "overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's "wealth. Look not every man on his own things, "but every man also on the things of others." But according to the plain and obvious meaning of these passages, no such thing as absolute disinterestedness is at all implied. For the same apostle again informs us as a motive for action, "That whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Ephesians VI, 8. And in Colossians III, exhorting husbands and wives, parents, children and servants, to the faithful performance of their respective duties, he thus exhorts and teaches; "Whatsoever ye do in word or "deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus;" "and "whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and

"not unto men: Knowing that of the Lord, ye shall "receive the *reward* of the *inheritance*; for ye serve "the Lord Christ." (Verses 17, 23, 24.) And the Lord Christ himself, taught and commanded, just in the same way, and to the same effect. "As ye would "that men should do to you, do ye also to them like- "wise. For if ye love them that love you, what "thanks have you? For sinners also love those, that "love them. And if ye do good to them who do "good to you, what thanks have ye? For sinners "also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of "whom ye hope to receive, what thanks have ye? for "sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much a- "gain. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and "lend, hoping for nothing again; and your *reward* "*shall be great*, and ye shall be the children of the "Highest." "Give, and it shall be given unto you; "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, "and running over, shall men give into your bosom: "for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it "shall be measured to you again." (Verses 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 38.)

From these indubitable and luminous doctrines of the gospel, it therefore clearly is manifest, that all the *disinterestedness* taught by Christ and his apostles was *merely*, a freedom from the *sordidness* of self seeking, from human applause, and from the transitory pleas- ures and paltry gains of the present life; to the neglect of almighty God, and of the ever enduring felicity and honours which flow from divine favour: whilst the highest purity of christian love is therein taught, to be

inseparably connected with the hope and expectation of divinely promised, ineffable rewards in eternal glory. And from hence results ample evidence, that all pretensions to Hopkinsian disinterestedness, are founded in but mere delusion; however well they may serve as an expedient to disguise the hideous deformity of the *reprobation scheme*. Nor can this *affected* disinterestedness conceal its own true character, which appears to be that of the *veryist selfishness* of *pride*; because it proposes to elevate its votaries into the godlike character of confering favours even on the Deity himself, by a voluntary offer; and that without hope of reward; to advance the divine glory, by the *endurance* of the tortures of eternal fire.

Predestination will be adverted to in my next letter.

LETTER XVI.

SIR,

PREDESTINATION, in the Calvinistick and Hopkinsian meaning of the term, consists (as you well know,) in a "divine, unchangeable, fore-ordination of whatsoever comes to pass." This doctrine whether correct or otherwise, seems to bear some resemblance to the notions concerning *fate*, which were entertained by many of the ancient heathen philosophers, who believed, "That whatever evils befel mankind, "were derived to them by a *fatal necessity*, to which "the gods themselves were subjected." But though

Some amongst them seem to have been established in this opinion, yet others, appear to have been involved in doubts, and great perplexity. Of this number was Tacitus, the Roman historian, who, in the following manner, expressed his doubts upon this subject, viz. "The question is intricate, whether sublunary contin-"gencies, are governed by the *immutable laws* of *fate*; "and by consequence whether the lot of man may be "said to be determined in his natal hour. Or wheth-"er *free will* and *moral agency*, are still so far allow-"ed, that each individual may chalk out the line of "his own conduct." *

It is to some persons also, an intricate question, from whence is the doctrine of a divine pre-ordination of all things whatsoever derived? Is it from the fatalism of the heathen? From mistaken views of the writings of St. Paul? From both of these united? Or from some other cause? A solution of this intricate point, we are now led to seek in the writings of a celebrated ecclesiastical historian. "The unhappy dis-"putes about the opinions of Pelagius, occasioned oth-"er controversies, prejudicial to the interests of true "christianity. In the course of this dispute, Augustin "had declared his opinion, concerning the necessity of "divine grace, in order to our salvation, and the *de-"crees* of *God*, with respect to the *future condition* of "men; without being always consistent with himself, "or intelligible to others. Hence, certain monks of

* Murphy's Tacitus, Annals, Volume 2, Book 4, Set 20; Page 30.

"Adrumetum and others, were led into a notion," "That God, not only *predestinated* the wicked, to "eternal punishment, but also to the guilt and trans- "gression for which they are punished; and that thus "both the good and the bad actions of all men, were "determined from eternity by a divine decree, and "*fixed* by an *invincible necessity*." "Those who em- "braced this opinion, were called *predestinarians*. "Augustin used his utmost influence and authority, "to prevent the spreading of this doctrine, and ex- "plained his true sentiments with more perspicuity, "that it might not be attributed to him. His efforts "were seconded by the councils of Arles and Lyons, "in which the doctrine in question, was *publickly re-* "*jected* and *condemned*." (Mosheim.)

This doctrine thus disowned by Augustin, who gave it birth, and condemned by the councils of Arles and Lyons, was revived in the ninth century, by Godeschalcus, an illustrious saxon monk, but was again condemned by Rabenus Bishop of Mentz, by Hincmar of Rheims, and by other ecclesiastical councils. But you need not sir, to be informed, of the adoption and propagation of this identical doctrine by Calvin, of its rejection by Arminius, or, of its being obstinately maintained by Synod of Dort, nor yet, that it now constitutes the back bone, and heart, and vitals of Calvinism, and Hopkinsianism.

But, although thus adopted and professed by numerous votaries, yet, there are but few, who have had the hardihood openly to confess the legitimate consequences of this tenet. The Hopkinsians however, are

not so dastardly, for to them belongs the praise of an open, bold, and explicit acknowledgment of some of its most objectionable implications and consequences.

As these acknowledged, and other inevitable consequences, have in the preceding letters, been scrutinized, and clearly ascertained to operate only as millstones on the neck of this doctrine of fatalism; we are now to direct our inquiries to the *proofs* upon which the doctrine *itself*, is *supposed* to rest. But as these enquiries must here be restricted within the narrow limits of one letter, the supposed *principal proofs only* can in this place be adverted to; and these be noticed but in a very concise manner.

The supposed evidences of the Calvinistick doctrine of the divine decrees, are chiefly to be sought for in the holy scriptures, and are considered as there existing in a two fold form. From the first class of texts, a *fore-ordination* of *all things whatsoever* is infered. And from the second, a special, personal, and definite, unconditional election of a part of mankind is derived; implying an unconditional reprobation of all others to eternal sin and punishment.

First class. The texts of this description are chiefly comprehended in the following, viz. "There are "many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the "counsel of the Lord, that shall stand." Proverbs x, IX, 21. "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the hea- "then to nought; he maketh the devices of the peo- "ple of none effect. The counsel of the Lord stan- "deth forever; the thoughts of his heart, to all gen- "erations." (Psalm XXXIII, 10, 11.) "For the

"Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul "it." (Isaiah XIV, 27.) "I know that whatsoever "God doeth, it shall be forever; nothing can be put "to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doeth "it, that men should fear before him." (Ecclesiastes III, 14.) "But he is of one mind, and who can "turn him? And what his soul desireth, even that he "doeth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed for me; and many such things are with him." (Job XXIII, 13, 14.) "I am God, and there is none "like me. Declaring the end from the beginning, "and from ancient times, (the things) that are not yet "done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do "all my pleasure." (Isaiah XLVI, 10.) "Now therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that "ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you "to preserve life." (Genesis XLV, 5.) "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked "hands, have crucified and slain." (Acts II, 23.) "For of a truth against thy holy child, Jesus, whom "thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, "with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, are gathered together. For to do whatsoever thy hand and "thy counsel determined before to be done." (IV, 27, 28.)

Amongst these texts, we are now sir, to search for evidence of a divine eternal fore-ordination of all things whatsoever, which come to pass. We will examine them particularly.

First. "There are many devices in a man's heart; "nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall "stand." Here an opposition is undeniably implied betwixt *man's devices*, and *God's counsel*, and it also is implied, that because thus opposed, the one shall *fall*, and the other *stand*, whilst nothing is at all intimated of a fore-ordination of all things whatsoever, but the contrary, for, *man's devices not being included in, but opposed to God's counsel*, or *decrees*, they are in themselves evidence, that all things are not *decreed* by the Almighty, for *they* are not so decreed.

Second. "The Lord bringeth the counsel of the "heathen to nought, he maketh the devices of the peo- "ple of none effect. The counsel of the Lord stand- "eth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all genera- "tions." As in this text, like "man's devices," in the former text, we here behold the *counsel* of the *heathen*, and *devices* of the *people*, opposed to, and *excluded from*, the *counsel* of the Lord, and from the *thoughts* of his heart; so, this text, like the former, operates altogether against that *sense* of predestination, which *comprehends all counsels*, and *excludes no* devices.

Third. "For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, "and who shall disannul it?" In this *predestinarian* text, there is not even a shred of the Calvinistick decrees. This is demonstrable from the context. "The "Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have "thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have "purposed so shall it stand. That I will break the "Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread

"him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off "them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders. "*This is the purpose, that is purposed* upon the "whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched "out upon all the nations. *For the Lord of hosts* "*hath purposed, and who shall disannul it.*" Verses 24, 25, 26, 27.

Fourth. "I know that whatsoever God *doeth* it "shall be forever; nothing can be put to it, nor any "thing taken from it: and God *doeth it* that men "should fear before him." This instructive passage refers not to God's designs, but *expressly* to his *doings*. His *works* are here justly and truly represented, as being so exquisitely perfect, as not to admit of any further improvement. There is no defect, therefore nothing to be added. There is nothing superfluous, therefore nothing can be deducted. And with this perfection, stability is here declared to be visibly impressed upon the works of the Lord, throughout his kingdoms of nature, grace and providence; in order that men, beholding as in a glass, the *contrast* of their ignorance with divine wisdom, of their impotence with almighty power, and of their dependency with the sovereignty of the uncontroled Ruler of the universe, should thereby be induced to yield the homage of their hearts to that self existent Being, whose stupendous works proclaim his eternal power and god-head. Such are the instructive lessons taught in this text; but which contains nothing whatsoever, whereon to found that *decree*, which even Calvin himself pronounced to be "*horrible.*"

Fifth. "But he is of one mind and who can turn "him? and what his soul desireth, even that he do-"eth. For he performeth the thing that is appointed "for me, and many such things are with him." Job's expressions are here highly figurative. Of God he says, "What his *soul* desireth, even that he doeth." But God being a Spirit could have no soul distinct from his Spiritual essence. Job had now been long smarting under the rod of heavy affliction. In his bitterness of grief he had cried unto God, and yet was not delivered. Hence he said that "God was of one mind," and asked "who could turn him?" for, from experience he found he could not. His sorrow still increasing, through the upbraidings of his mistaken friends; he submissively receives this additional affliction, as a providential allotment divinely assigned to him; saying, "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with him." Thus circumstanced, we behold Job tried like Abraham, to discover all that was in his heart. As a beloved son chastened, he weeps under his father's rod: but it being for his profit, no parental weakness spares him for his crying; he is made to endure all that unerring wisdom sees needful to inflict. And as these dealings of divine love are with Job, so "*many such things* are with the Lord;" who, in like manner, scourgeth every son whom he receiveth; that all thereby may become partakers of his holiness. Such are the sentiments devoutly taught by Job in the words before us. And if these doctrines as thus explained, are the true signification of this scripture passage, then all who de-

duce the *decrees* of Calvin therefrom, must first infuse thereinto such meaning, merely by the force of their own imaginations. But on these points, a careful examination of the whole twenty third chapter will best enable each to judge for himself.

Sixth. "I am God, and there is none like me; "declaring the end from the beginning, and from an- "cient times (the things) that are not yet done, say- "ing, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my "pleasure."

That almighty God should be well pleased in the advancement of his own glory, that his highest glory should require created intelligences to behold it; that these intelligences, in order to be rendered justly accountable for their conduct, should be endued with power of discernment betwixt moral good and evil, and be invested with moral and all other needed ability to refuse the evil and choose the good: And yet, that Deity should reserve the right for the display of his divine attributes, to suspend at pleasure, the freedom of all his creatures, by subjecting their wills and actions to a controling necessity, *but never so* as to *expose innocence* to *unavoidable guilt* and *ruin;* are most interesting truths and self evident to right reason. To these dictates of right reason, divine revelation adds other truths, no less reasonable when so revealed. Of this description is the glad tidings of redeeming love, wherein pardoning mercy and restoring grace display the brightest glories of the divine character. And also of this description is that doctrine of divine *retaliation* which teaches, that where the richest overtures of

divine mercy are long obstinately rejected, divine wrath often justly abandons such self destroyers, not only to the imperious influence of their own corruptions, but even to diabolical necessitating influence, whereby such miscreant wretches are hurried on to unavoidable and utter destruction. These premises thus previously laid down, we proceed now to consider the above text, and others. "Declaring the end from the beginning." This thing whose end was declared from its beginning, and in the doing of which God fulfilled his "pleasure," was accomplished by Cyrus, and is thus elsewhere expressed; "That saith "of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform *all* "*my pleasure;* even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt "be built; and to the temple, thy foundation shall be "laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cy- "rus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue na- "tions before him: And I will loose the loins of "kings; to open before him the two leaved gates, "and the gates shall not be shut: I will go before "thee and make the crooked places straight: I will "break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder "the bars of iron: And I will give thee, the treasures "of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that "thou mayest know that I the Lord, who call thee by "name, am the God of Israel, &c." But though Cyrus is thus called the Lord's shepherd, because he was to restore Jerusalem, and the temple; yet, as he in fulfilling the divine pleasure, was to destroy the power of Babylon; he is also styled a *ravenous* bird. "Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that

"executeth my counsel from a far country: Yea, I "have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass, I have "purposed it, I will also do it." But in all this purposing, predicting, and bringing to pass, there is no implied predestination of all other things; neither is there any thing predicted or decreed therein, respecting the private life and character of Cyrus himself. It is true the text under consideration, contains another clause, which greatly extends beyond the case of Cyrus, the idea of predestinated things and events; "Declaring from *ancient times*, (the things) that are not (yet) done." But even this being restricted to *ancient times*, extends not back, before time was. And it is further restricted to things *declared* in *ancient times*. But as all things which have taken place, which now are happening, and will hereafter occur, were not declared in ancient times; so these ancient predictions prove no more, than what they have specified. It is true there are many other prophecies besides those of ancient times. But it is as true that, but a very small part of what hath been, which now is, and which hereafter shall be, hath ever been predicted; wherefore, to infer the whole from only a part, and that part the smaller one too, violates that first principle of right reason, which teaches, that "*Universals* "*are not* contained in *particulars*, *nor* can they be in- "fered from them."

Seventh. "Now therefore be not grieved, nor an- "gry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for "God did send me before you to preserve life."

How deity could send Joseph into Egypt, through the instrumentality of his brethren's crimes, without causing those crimes, either by a decree necessitating their sin, or by an immediate constraining influence on their hearts producing it, has by many been deemed inconceivably mysterious: But God's own account of this transaction if attended to, will make the simplest understand. "When Joseph's brethren saw that "their father loved him more than all his brethren, "they hated him, and could not speak peaceably unto "him. And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it "to his brethren; and they hated him yet the more: "And he said unto them, hear, I pray you, this dream "which I have dreamed: For behold we were bind-"ing sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf arose, and "stood upright, and behold your sheaves stood round "about, and made obeisance unto my sheaf. And "they hated him yet the more for his dreams, and for "his words. And his brethren envied him." This most interesting narrative, duly attended to in all its parts, developes the deep, but consistent methods of divine providence. Designing at a future period, to punish Egypt as a *nation*, for their pride, idolatry, and oppression; and connecting with this event, a marvellous deliverance of his covenant people, which should instruct all nations, and generations; it therefore was expedient that Israel should go down into the house of bondage. And as the iniquity of that generation, required the corrective of a seven years famine, the set time was arrived, when Joseph was to go on in his mission, in order to prepare the way of his father's

house. Joseph's brethren uninfluenced by their father's piety, instructions and example; familiarized to crimes, of which only the report now remains, and some, deep stained with blood, were all seeking opportunity to supplant a hated rival. At this juncture, divine providence places Joseph in their power. Ferocious as tigers, they conspire his death. But their counsel is not of the Lord, it shall not stand. God will do all his pleasure. The wrath of these men, shall indeed praise him. But there is more wrath than is needful to his purpose—the remainder shall be restrained. Reuben, though not a good man, yet is not wholly depraved. He is not a man of blood, he pities his brother, and venerates his father. Natural affection still operates within him. He counsels not to slay Joseph, but to confine him in a pit. He meditates to restore Joseph to his father, but his meditation is not of God, it shall not stand. Joseph must go down into Egypt, God's messengers now appear. The covetous heart of Judah, like another Judas, meditates a price for his brother. The Ishmaelite merchant-men consent, and Joseph is sold into Egypt, for twenty pieces of silver; but God is with him. Here then, through the whole, we discover man's free agency in operation, and yet, the accomplishment of God's steadfast purposes taking place. What is unchangeably foreordained, eventually is accomplished: Whilst creature purposes are formed, which become effectual or abortive, according to their interference, or non interference with God's unalterable designs.

Eighth and ninth. "Him, being delivered, by the "determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye "have taken, and by wicked hands, have crucified "and slain." "For of a truth against thy holy child "Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and "Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of "Israel, are gathered together. For to do whatsoever "thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be "done." To add yet greater force to these texts, a tenth may here be annexed.

"And truly the Son of Man goeth as it was deter-"mined: But woe unto that man by whom he is be-"trayed." (Luke xxii, 22.) In these scriptures thus before us, we perceive Judas, and Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews and Gentiles accused, of conspiracy and murder; and yet, in these transactions performed by them, they have done only what God before by his determinate counsel and fore-knowledge, had decreed should be done. Can such apparent discordancy as this, be reconciled with *justice*, on the part of God? Or with moral *freedom* on the part of man? To solve these difficulties, and to reply in the affirmative to these questions, we need only, duly to avail ourselves of the lessons taught us, in the case of Joseph and his brethren. These ancient conspirators were verily guilty, because they were volunteers in the work of iniquity. Though God, in order to advance Joseph, and for other desirable ends, subjects him, to bondage, and deep distress; yet, his brethren afflict and betray him through hatred, without a cause. Under no necessity but that of vile affections, they gov-

ern themselves, and act only as *they decree* in their *own* hearts. Imperious and malignant passions have indeed beclouded their reason, seared their consciences, and marred the finer feelings of their souls. Long accustomed to do evil, leavened with the cruel anger and fierce wrath of Simeon and Levi, and tainted with the calculating covetousness of Judah, these self depraved men rushed on to deeds which they never would have done, had they but retained *natural affection* even in the same degree, that Reuben did. For compassion for a brother in distress, and affection for an *aged* and *fond father*, saved Jacob's *first born*, from participating in the *depths* of that detestable transaction. Nor would the divine decree have been at all frustrated thereby; for the decree was not that the patriarchs should sell Joseph, but, that he should be sold into Egypt. Had they not volunteered to effect this purpose, others stood ready to have accomplished it. The slave dealing Ishmaelites, how readily would they have kidnapped this forlorn youth, had they but found him distressed, and straying in the wilderness; or if some feeling yet remained in the bosoms of these traders in human flesh, some other remorseless band of the Ishmaelite robbers of the desart, seizing him as their prey, might have sold him to this Caravan, for the twenty silver pieces.

We now return to the betrayers and murderers of Christ, and will begin with Judas. This notorious offender was the son of one Simon. (John vi, 71.) "The sirname Iscariot was given him to distinguish "him from Judas Thaddeus, Christ's kinsman. The

"literal meaning of Iscariot (signifies merely) a man "of Cariot, or Heriot, a town within the tribe of Ju- "dah, and probably the place of his birth." His former occupation is unknown; but after his call to the Apostleship, he was appointed steward, or treasurer, for the apostolic household. Various have been the opinions concerning his true character; but there is no evidence that he ever possessed true and genuine piety. The probability is, that he at an early period became deeply corrupted with the sordid selfishness of griping avarice. St. John affirms of him, that he was a *thief.* And Christ speaking of him saith, "Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a "devil." "For Jesus knew from the beginning who "should betray him." The reason why Christ made choice of such a man to be an apostle, he has himself expressly declared; "I speak not of you all, I know "whom I have chosen; but that the scripture may be "fulfilled. *He that eateth bread with me, hath lift-* "*ed up his heel against me.* Now I tell you before "it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may be- "lieve that I am he." (John XIII, 18, 19.) As under the gospel dispensation, the salvation of mankind was to be suspended on the evangelical condition of believing upon the Messiah, it therefore became of the utmost consequence that his person, character and mission, should be so clearly specified, so distinctly marked out, and so publickly announced and proclaimed abroad in the world, as that sincere, diligent and candid inquirers after the true way of salvation, should be left in no danger of mistaking on these all

important points. It was, therefore, for this reason that Christ, and his apostles in his name, performed so many miracles; that he and they preached so often and in so publick a manner; and that so many and such explicit prophecies were predicted concerning him, and concerning things and events pertaining to his kingdom. Amongst these we recognise the express mention of his death, together with so many of its attendant circumstances. Amongst these things thus predicted, we likewise discover the *official rank* of several of the chief actors; as well as *particular parts*, which *persons holding these offices*, were to perform in this predestinated tragedy. Of this kind of prediction is Psalm II, 1, 2, 3. "Why do the "heathens rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers "take counsel together, against the Lord, and against "his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands "asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Also of this description is Psalm XLI, 9. "Yea mine own "familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of "my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me." And likewise Psalm CIX, 8. "Let his days be few; and let another take his office."

Here then it should *most particularly be noted*, that no one name is mentioned, no peculiar designation of any one particular person given; but the predictions declared in such general terms, as not *necessarily* to implicate any one particular being. It was not so in other prophecies. Cyrus, Josiah, John, and Jesus, were each specified by their proper person-

al names, before they were born: And the things predicted concerning them so declared, that they could not possibly have been fulfilled in any other persons but themselves. But in the prophecies under investigation, great latitude is given, in which to reconcile *human freedom* with divine *sovereignty* and *predeterminations*. Kings and rulers are implicated, but kings and rulers, there were many. The people, and the Gentiles, are mentioned, but all the people of Israel, and all the Gentiles are not meant. The traitor was to be in "office," and to eat familiarly of Christ's bread, at his table: But he was to be yet chosen to that office. The unalterable decree is gone forth, but the lot is not yet fallen to any one of the actors. Before it can justly fall identically to any individual, kings, rulers, people, gentiles, and an individual, must each render himself worthy of such an allotment. This worthiness must personally be acquired, whilst in the possession of a self determining power over their own wills, and be effected by a free and obstinate abuse of reason, a perversion of conscience, a corruption of natural affections, a rejection of the gospel, and a resistance of the strivings of the holy spirit; and such persons were those prodiges in depravity, unto whom God, in his holy providence, assigned irrevocably the several parts which they finally performed. Judas, as we have already seen, was at his elevation to the apostolic office, incurably corrupt, for he was a devil. He was not however, always such, but like all other men, was once a candidate for salvation, and eternal life.

In respect of advantages, for the attainment of true piety, those conferred on him were of superiour kind. Descended from Abraham, within the covenant of circumcision, privileged with synagogue and temple worship, and yet above all favoured with the preaching and ministry of John, he stood distinguished with divine favour above millions of his race. But he suffered his heart to go after covetousness. He prefered the love of *Mammon*, to the love of his *Creator*, and in despite of every virtuous, honourable, and religious consideration, became a thief. Not lost however, to a sense of the *odium* of theft, if discovered, he seeks to disguise his character, by affecting to be religious; and like Ananias, and Saphira, in pursuit of religious fame, he maintains an external profession of piety, until mercy itself will no longer plead in his behalf. A jealous God, wearied with the specious pretensions of this sordid dissembler, says of him, "he is cleaved to his idols, let him alone." Abandoned of God he now seeks his good things, wholly in the acquisition of temporal interests; but he still seeks them, under the covert of religion. At this juncture, Christ attracts the attention of the multitude, by his preaching and miracles. The idea of the Messiah's temporal kingdom is in every mind. Judas susceptible of such an attractive impression, is not the last to range himself under the banners of so popular and promising a leader. The discerning eye of Christ, marks him out. Twelve apostles are now to be chosen. It is indispensable that eleven of them, should be men of honest hearts; other qualifications are also requisite, and nu-

merous candidates are now before him: But thoroughly acquainted with their present characters, and past conduct, he elects eleven in whom he reposes confidence; for infering the future from the past, he judges, that those "who were faithful in little, will also be faithful in much." He needs likewise a reprobate, one who is self corrupted beyond recovery; he thoroughly understands the character, and perceives the lost condition of Judas. He perceives in him, a wretch, self fitted for his purpose, and discovers in him a meetness beyond that of all others, voluntarily to execute the decreed treachery. Upon Judas the lot falls; he is now elected, and snared in an evil hour. And hence said Christ, Matthew xxvi, 24, "The Son "of Man goeth, as it is written of him: But woe un- "to that man, by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! "It had been good for that man, if he had not been "born." Nor can this scripture, nor others to the same effect, be possibly reconciled with the inviolable principles of reason and justice, but only on the presumption, that Christ believed himself, and meant to be so understood, as thus believing; that though his own death by crucifixion, through variety of means, was most certainly pedestinated; yet, that neither Judas, nor any other of the criminal actors therein, became involved in the necessity of co-operation, but *wholly* through their own *once avoidable* misconduct. And most strictly do Peter's words agree herewith. "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, both "Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and "the people of Israel, were gathered together. For

"to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel, deter-
"mined before to be done." The things to be done, and the rank and stations of the performers, are predetermined, but not the individual persons. Just like Joseph's being sold into Egypt, that was determined on, but by whom left for volunteer candidates to decide. Christ must be betrayed by an apostle. But the choice of that apostle, who shall perform the foul deed, cannot be made, until a candidate has rendered himself worthy of that disgrace, through an *avoidable*, *voluntary*, and *base* corruption of himself. Christ is to be "delivered unto the Gentiles, to be mocked,
"spitefully entreated, spitted upon, scourged and cru-
"cified." But these things cannot be done, until fit instruments self qualified, offer their personal services.

Herod by forbearing truly to repent during the ministry of John, while his heart was yet tender, neglected thereby, his day of the visitations of divine grace. By shutting John up in prison, he sinned yet more: But by beheading him, he then thoroughly qualified himself to perform the part of a king, in the cruel mockery of the Saviour. And the priests, the rulers, Pontius Pilate, and the Roman Soldiers, all by rejecting, not merely, the preaching and baptism of John, but more especially, by resisting the evidence of the miracles and preaching of Christ, rendered themselves fit, and deserving subjects, of that judicial blinding influence of prejudice, unto which they were given up; whereby they mistook Christ's true and real character. "For had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." (1 Corinthians 11, 8.)

And such of the rulers, people, centurions and soldiers, as duly submitted to the evidence and power of Christ's ministry, were preserved, from participating in the guilt and misery, of these infamous conspirators, and murderers.

But it is highly expedient that we in this place carefully review this subject. Scriptural predestination, so far as it involves human agency, and as it is here admitted and maintained, consists of two distinct kinds. First. It implies such a subjection of human volition and action to divine control, as in reality makes them, as to cause and effect, the actions of God; as where "the king's heart, in the hand of God, is turned, as the rivers of water are turned." For rivers of water are invariably turned by a natural, and not by a moral influence. And to these we may add such predicted actions of Cyrus and Josiah, as left neither of them any possibility of refraining from the performance of these things. And secondly. It comprehends all such events, as the holy scriptures have predicted shall *inevitably* come to pass; but yet, not allotted *unavoidably* to any particular individual actors; but *suspended* in *reserve*, as punishments, to be justly inflicted on such *future* great transgressors, as shall so corrupt themselves, in despite of the strivings of the divine spirit, as to *rush* with *greediness* on the perpetration of those actions, when divine providence may judicially afford them the awful opportunity.

Predestination, as thus taught in the holy scriptures, is a doctrine differing widely from predestination, as taught by Calvinism and Calvinism improved. Scrip-

tural predestination embraces *some* things *only*, but the predestination of the two Calvinisms comprehends *all* things whatsoever. Bible predestination interferes not with the essential freedom of moral agency; for though it consists with an abandonment of habitual sinners to the bondage of corruption, and delusions of errour; yet, these corruptions are the offspring of their own misconduct; and these delusions are from satan, the god of this world, unto whom they yielded themselves as willing slaves. Thus was Judas hurried on, and thus Christ's other betrayers and murderers were blinded and misled. But the predestination of Calvinism and Hopkinsianism, admits of *no moral ability*, whereby the reprobate could ever, in any wise, have *escaped final perdition;* the former binding the sinner down from his birth, to his death, under a supposed universal depravity of *all* his *faculties*, natural and moral, wholly depriving him of all ability to obey either the law, or the gospel: Whilst the latter, preposterously invests the reprobate wretch, with perfect natural power to perform all moral requirements; and yet fetters him from all such action, by a *total* moral *inability* and *depravity*, produced, not by previous misconduct, nor yet by Satan, but, by Deity himself continually operating on his heart.

And here it is important further to observe an existing errour, great in itself, and the prolific parent of other errours, originating in part, from *mistaken* views of predestination, and *common* to both Calvinisms. It consists in the belief, that no unregenerate man is capable of performing any thing as a mean, tending in

any wise, to the furtherance of the procurement of his salvation through Christ; and this for two reasons. First, because the predestinating decree of all things, has *unalterably* fixed the final destinations of all men, beyond the power of any means whatsoever to hasten or avert them. And secondly, because the law requiring nothing but perfect love, is only further violated, by every effort short of this love, which the sinner makes, whether by confession of sin, prayer, or such like penitentiary performances. Hence the preacher not unfrequently is involved in inextricable embarrassments, for happening to stumble on texts strongly urging repentance and reformation on sinners, but being systematically taught otherwise, and tossed to and fro, betwixt gospel and creed; he fatigues himself, and disgusts and bewilders his hearers, with a jargon of contradiction; one moment urging on sinners to do many things, and the next moment, assuring them that all their doings are worse than nothing; for they are only, an adding of further sins, to former transgressions. But though both preacher and hearers, are each perplexed and dissatisfied, yet, neither knows how to remedy the evil; by disentangling the truth from the errour.

But the way is plain and the manner obvious. Only admit what the scriptures teach, and as they teach, and there will be no difficulty.

Admit, that what God unconditionally decrees and executes, through the instrumentality of any of his creatures, necessitated to co-action with him, by his positive influence on their hearts, are acts, *of God's*

own righteousness; unto whom *alone*, belongs the supreme glory, whilst inferiour honour is confered on the favoured instrument, whom he thus graciously selects to execute his will, whether it be a Cyrus, a Josiah, or any other person. And on the other hand, candidly allow that God's *fixed*, and *yet conditional* decrees, will eventually find accomplishment, agreeably to the predestinated condition, and as exemplified, in the several cases of Joseph and his brethren, of Christ and Judas, and of Jesus and his betrayers, and murderers. And distinctly impressed with these great truths, the preacher's mind, and the hearers understandings, will greatly be relieved as to the difficulty of clearly distinguishing betwixt the real boundaries of divine decrees, and divine sovereignty; and of human freedom, and human responsibility. But to all this, must be added, clearly discriminating views betwixt the relation to, and the demands of law upon mankind, and the operation and extent of gospel conditional influence upon the human family, in order to detect the fallacy of calvinism, in arguing from the demands of the law, to the frustration of the demands of the gospel. The law saith, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, &c." The gospel saith to the detected sinner, "Thy heart is not right "in the sight of God. Repent therefore, of this thy "wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought "of thine heart, may be forgiven thee." And again, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. "Cleanse your hands ye sinners, and purify your "hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn

"and weep." But an Hopkinsian Calvinist would say, "Sinner make you a new heart instantly, for you "are well able. The law forbids every thing but "perfect love; therefore, at the peril of your soul, "neither pray, nor weep, nor mourn, but first love "God, and then believe and repent after." To illustrate this subject, we will suppose an officer, a soldier, and a doctor, of the same regiment before us. The soldier sick and wounded, is incapable of performing a soldier's duty. The officer is an *austere* man of unfeeling heart, and imperiously orders the sick man to his post of duty. The invalid, for such he is, endeavours to obey orders. But neither his dress, his gait, nor yet his motions, are soldier-like. He is threatened with a court martial: he pleads infirmity: but the doctor interposes, and pleads the sick man's cause; demands him, as belonging to his department, and refutes the erroneous inferences from law, which under pretended claims of justice, would subvert the well authenticated, and higher claims of mercy. Were this but duly reflected on, the sin sick sinner would never be forbidden to pray, but would be directed to appeal from the erroneous conclusions of men, to that all gracious physician of souls, who is infinitely more merciful than even the good Samaritan. With these correct and *impressive* views of divine truth, the preacher would not depart from consistency in his discourses, nor the people be justly disgusted with paradox and absurdity. But both preachers and people, fed with the "sincere milk," and the uncorrupt "meat" of the gospel word,

would grow up in all things unto Christ, as their spiritual and living head.

Well aware sir, that to believe in the predestination of all things, without any exception whatsoever, is an article occupying too high, and too important a place in your creed, to be ever readily surrendered; and knowing, that if any were to be so surrendered, that, the very last predestinated thing given up, would be the eternal, personal, and unconditional destination of Judas, unavoidably to perform the traitorous part, which he acted in the murder of the Saviour of men. I therefore can easily anticipate your strenuous defence of these points. Nor should I be at all surprised, were you to denounce as Arminian heresy, or even as something still worse, the foregoing argumentation, opposed so directly to your most favourite points. But as all such declamations are but mere impotency, I shall prefer meeting your objections in the form of arguments.

Objection First. "The assumption of arguments, "militating against an eternal, unconditional, and per- "sonal predestination of Judas, to the performance of "his vile actions; and to the accomplishment of his "fearful end, is not merely a feeble attempt in support "of a sinking cause, but is also a most reprehensible "misconstruction of the most obvious and undenia- "ble import of St. Peter's most solemn and express "declaration, in Acts 1, 16, 17, 18, 20. "Men "and brethren, this scripture *must needs have been* "*fulfilled*, which the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of "David, before spake, concerning Judas, which was

"guide to them that took Jesus. For he was num-
"bered with us, and had obtained part of this minis-
"try. Now this man purchased a field, with the re-
"ward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst
"asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.
"For it is written in the book of psalms, Let his hab-
"itation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein;
"and his bishopric let another take." These words of Peter, although generally imagined to constitute an impregnable bulwark of Calvinistick predestination, are discovered, when closely inspected, to afford but feeble aid to this system, and as is clearly manifest from the following extract from a note thereon, by a candid and ingenious Calvinist. "*This scripture must needs have*
"*been fulfilled*, &c. Two prophecies are (verse 20,)
"quoted for this purpose, from Psalm LXIX, 25, and
"CIX, 8, and it has been matter of much debate,
"whether they do in their *original sense*, refer to Ju-
"das, or to the enemies of David. It is certain the
"sixty-ninth psalm is not to be confined to Judas.
"There are so many passages in both the psalms in
"question, *more applicable* to David, than to Christ,
"that I was *very inclinable* to render the words be-
"fore us, *The scripture which the Holy Ghost spake*
"*before, by the mouth of David, must necessarily*
"*have been fulfilled concerning Judas, &c.* But it is
"certain, the order of the Greek words will not so
"naturally admit this. I therefore conclude, that
"while David prophecied of the calamities that should
"befal *his persecutors*, it was revealed to him by the
"Holy Spirit, that the enemies and murderers of the

"Messiah, should inherit *those curses* in all their ter-
"rour, and be yet more miserable than the persons
"on whom they were more immediately to fall. *This*
"*fact*, I take to be *asserted in those words* of Peter,
"*as what was revealed by the same Spirit to him as*
"*an apostle.*" (Doddridge.) This judicious and candid commentator, if *correct* in this note, as to the *main fact*, revealed by the Holy Spirit, first to David, and afterwards to Peter; then it will follow, that neither Judas, nor his successor in office, were ever made known, personally to David, but that he foresaw only the certain overthrow of Christ's enemies, without knowing any thing personally, concerning any of them as individuals; and that all he knew was, that one betraying a high trust, should have dreadful calamities inflicted on him, whilst a successor should be raised up, to fill the office from whence the traitor should fall. But any man holding, betraying, and falling from that office, would as to any foresight David had of those events, as *really* have fulfilled these predictions, as Judas did. And it is of great importance here to remark further, that as David's predictions refered so *much more particularly*, and *evidently* to his own enemies, than they did to Christ's enemies, as to require a *special* revelation, to give them evidently the latter direction; so it is no less requisite in order to a right understanding of Peter's words, to examine them strictly by correct reasoning, and by the analogy of other New Testament references, to Old Testament prophecies. In respect to *close* and *correct* reasoning, we must apply it to the assertion of the purchase of

a field by Judas; for we know that Judas never did it—although it was done by others, with his thirty silver pieces. And in respect to analogy of similar references, we should recollect that assertions of prophecies fulfilled, are frequently so made, as to require a qualified explanation. Three only, out of many I shall here notice.

First. Matthew II, 14, 15. "He took the young "child, and his mother by night, and departed into "Egypt, and was there until the death of Herod; that "it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord, "by the prophet, saying, out of Egypt have I called "my son." This refers to Hosea XI, 1, "When "Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my "son out of Egypt." This primarily and properly meant Israel, coming out of Egypt, under Moses, but figuratively and proverbially, it is applied to Christ, as delivered out of the hand of Herod, whose tyranny was no less cruel than that of Pharoah.

Second. Matthew II, 17, 18. "Then was ful- "filled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, "saying, In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamen- "tation, and weeping, and great mourning. Rachel "weeping for her children, and would not be com- "forted, because they are not." "This prophesy "and its application differ in two respects. First, the "persons spoken of in the prophesy were not put to "death as in the history; and secondly, the lamenta- "tion described by the prophet, was in Ramah, "whereas that by the evangelist was in Bethlehem. "Wherefore the application of the prophesy to the

"slaughter of the infants, is made rather by way of "*accommodation*, than *completion*. That is, it is an "application of the expressions and figures, rather than "of the prophesy itself." (Macknight.)

Third. Matthew xxvii, 9, 10. "Then was ful- "filled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the proph- "et, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, "the price of him that was valued, whom they of the "children of Israel did value, and gave them for the "potters field, as the Lord appointed me." This passage, every candid person must acknowledge to be attended with great difficulties, for, although here ascribed to Jeremiah, it is not to be found any where in the writings of that prophet; but something in *part* like it, occurs in Zachariah. "So they weighed for "my price, thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord "said unto me, cast it unto the potter: A goodly "price, that I was prized by them, and I took the "thirty pieces of silver, and cast unto the potter in the "house of the Lord." (xi, 12, 13.)

To reconcile then, the evangelist with the prophet, in this instance, as well as in various others, requires a candid and critical exposition of both prophesy and quotation, but which neither time, limits, nor subject will here permit.

But from the whole, this inference most plainly and inevitably results, viz. That New-Testament references, to Old-Testament prophecies, are fit and proper subjects for most critical investigation; because not unfrequently the latter term *events*, *fulfilments*, where they bear only varieties of resemblance to predictions

in the former, but which predictions, have more full accomplishments in events of earlier ages. And this *critical* and *strict scrutiny*, is still more necessary, because, whilst some predictions have a full and perfect accomplishment, in the events of the New-Testament, alone; yet others, in their completion, are divided so as to comprehend two events, one in the old, and another in the New-Testament, and hence these are denominated double prophecies. Numbers xxiv, 17, affords an example of this kind. "I shall see "him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh; "there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre "shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of "Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." For all allow that in David, and in Christ these predictions received accomplishment. But whilst this scrutinizing attention is proper in all cases where prophecies as above, are quoted by the evangelists, it is more especially so, where these prophecies refer more particularly to Christ's sufferings, and their attendant, or remote relations; because the predictions refering to these events, were frequently communicated in such a mysterious manner, as to leave the prophets themselves in great perplexity, as to the real import of what they had themselves foretold. So that *like other men*, they had to study, to pray, and to inquire diligently into the meaning of the spirit speaking by them—and after all their researches, and this very spirit further aiding them, they obtained unto, but general intimations, of what was thus to come to pass. The premises, from whence these inferences are derived, are contain-

ed in 1 Peter 1, 10, 11, 12. "Of which salvation "the prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, "who prophecied of the grace that should come unto "you: Searching what, and what manner of time, the "spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when "it testified before hand, the sufferings of Christ, and "the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was "revealed, that *not unto themselves, but unto us*, "they did minister the things which are now reported "unto you, by them that have preached the gospel "unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from "heaven; which things the angels desire to look "into."

In this interesting scripture, we are informed, that the objects of the prophet's inquiry, and diligent search, *was* to know, *what* the spirit in them meant, by what they predicted, and the time when the predictions should be accomplished; and in it we are further informed, that the knowledge they obtained by these inquiries was, that the things predicted, were "not for themselves," or cotemporaries, but for that generation of believing Jews and Gentiles, who were the cotemporaries of the Apostles. Nor can *more than this* be fairly infered from this passage. And as it would be doing violence to this text, to extend the prophetic knowledge, to a personal, or particular knowledge of the apostles, evangelists, and their converts; so it would be doing an equal violence to it, to extend their views to a particular acquaintance with the enemies of Christ and his church, in such a manner, as to designate personally, a Judas, an Herod, a Pontius Pilate,

or the other betrayers, and murderers of the Saviour. And as the prophets, although inspired to foretel events, yet *needed* to exert diligent inquiry, in order to obtain but a faint and general knowledge of what they themselves foretold; so the evangelists, although inspired to connect *predictions* in the Old-Testament, with events recorded in the New-Testament, yet they, like the prophets, appear to have equally *needed* the vigilant exertion of their own minds, in order to discern the agreement betwixt such predictions and events; and although divinely aided in such exertions, yet, they appear to have generally communicated such revealed discoveries, in such words and manner, as were most familiar to themselves. It is on this ground of inference, that some part of the disagreement betwixt the inspired writers, in respect to the "potter's field," may without serious difficulty, be obviated. For unless we allow a personal formation and arrangement of ideas, in the evangelists themselves, as well as a discretionary latitude, for the expression of their ideas; it will be no easy task to reconcile Matthew with the prophet, nor to harmonize Peter with Matthew, on the same point. For proof of this, it should be noted, that the *prophesy* makes no manner of mention of a "*field*" being purchased of the potter, as see Zacharias xi, 13. Although Matthew in chapter xxvii, 9, 10, making use of a figurative style, asserts contrary to *plain* reality, that the prophesy *expressed* the purchase of that *field*. But Matthew's meaning is obvious; he expressed not the *words*, *but* the *completion* of the prophesy. And

which completion was effected in the act of the chief priests, when with Judas's money, they purchased the potter's field. And in respect to Peter on the same point, we discover in him as great a departure from *reality* and from *Matthew*, as there was in the latter, from *reality* and from the *prophet:* For the act of purchase, performed by the chief priests, after Judas's death, Peter asserts, was done by Judas himself. Acts 1, 18. Here then it is, that we are furnished with an all important *clue* to the true meaning of Peter's words, in Acts 1, 16. In this passage, this apostle gives a *personal* direction of Psalm XLI, 9, to Judas, not merely by office, character and conduct, but by name. This identification of name and person, was not derived from the prophesy itself: But as Matthew by comparing the prophesy with the price paid for the "*field*" of "*blood*," derived from both his inference, as above stated; so Peter comparing David's words, with the *rank*, *transgression*, and *end* of Judas, infered his assertion from *both*, thereby only meaning, that the prediction of the Holy Ghost, speaking by David, obtained completion in Judas. Should this reasoning be rejected on the ground of its derogating from Peter's infallibility as an apostle, and as incompatible with that baptism of the Holy Ghost which he obtained on the great day of penticost. The reply in this case, is both easy and obvious, and in more ways than one. First. Peter's comment on this prophesy, concerning Judas, was made before he received the baptism of penticostal inspiration. Secondly. That baptism great as it was, did not render Peter infallible in all cases, as

witness the necessity of a vision to remove his erroneous scruples before his visit to Cornelius. And still further, if the above construction of Peter's assertion, militates aught against Peter's apostolick qualifications; then an unavoidable and similar construction of his expressions, concerning Judas as purchasing a field which he never did purchase, will be equally hostile to him, and the like objection will lie against Matthew, and against all other New-Testament writers, who have written in the same style, and used a like manner of expression. But all such objections are but mere cavils, and destitute of all argument, because the inspired penman *designed* to be understood in these instances, *not literally, but figuratively.* And in this figurative style of both prophets and evangelists, we may discover a portion of the "*manifold wisdom of God,*" whereby agreeably to the "mind of the Spirit," things *fixed,* and *divinely decreed* to be in themselves *inevitable* and *immutable,* are nevertheless so connected with other things and circumstances, *conditional* and *variable* in themselves, as, that whilst *innocence* is subjected to unavoidable sufferings from wickedness, still wickedness *may be avoidable* by those who perpetrate it, that so *divine sovereignty,* and *human liberty,* may fully accord and harmonize together.

Objection Second. "The admission of the pre-
"destination of any event, to be in some of its cir-
"cumstances and relations, immutable and uncondi-
"tional; but in others, unfixed and conditional, im-
"plies a contradiction, and is utterly unexampled in
"the bible." This objection is formidable in *sound*

only; for though it is true that the doctrine here objected to, is such, as to imply a contradiction to both Calvinisms, yet for this alone, it is not likely to be in contradiction either with itself, or with the soundest reasoning. I shall however, here confine my reply to three scriptural facts, and which if well authenticated, and clearly established to be correctly in point, will serve every purpose of sound argumentation on this deciding question.

Fact First. The death and sufferings of Christ, provisionally stipulated before the foundation of the world, prefigured by the shed blood of innumerable victims, foretold by many prophets, and most expressly declared by Christ himself, all will allow, to have been as to the *thing itself*, an event divinely predestinated. And yet, it is indubitably manifest, that there was in the time of it, another thing, adventitiously and contingently, so connected with the Redeemer's passion and death, as most fearfully to impend over him; but which he happily averted in the hour of his agonizing prayers. Our authority for this conclusion is found in Hebrews v, 7. "Who in the days of his flesh, "when he had offered up prayers and supplications "with strong crying, and tears unto him, who was "able to save him from death; and was heard in that "he feared." What this evil was which Christ thus so much apprehended, but which through his strong crying and prayers was thus averted, is to us unknown, because expressed only under the *figurative appellation death.* But it nevertheless affords demonstrative proof of the very point in question; because whatever

this dreaded evil was, yet, as it did so impend, and was so averted, it was a circumstance *contingently* attendant upon an event, *predestinated to be immutable* in some other respects. Nor is there any possible way of avoiding this conclusion, but by rejecting Paul's testimony as to the fact; or by so explaining away the meaning of this text, as to violate the fixed principles of reason and common sense. Or yet, by the too common expedient of resorting to the fallacy of a begging of the question, by confidently asserting, that though not revealed, yet, that most certainly it was predestinated that Christ, by his prayers and tears, should have so averted that dreaded evil.

Facts Second and Third. Nearly connected with the crucifixion of Christ, was the decree to destroy Jerusalem, by the armies of the Romans. The horrours and fixedness of that dreadful event, were thus predicted by Christ, "And when ye shall see Jeru-"salem compassed with armies, then know that the "desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which "are in Judea, flee unto the mountains; and let them "which are in the midst of it, depart out; and let not "them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For "these be the days of vengeance, that all things *which* "*are written, may be fulfilled.* But woe unto them "that are with child, and to them that give suck in "those days; for there shall be great distress in the "land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall "fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away "captive into all nations: And Jerusalem shall be "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the

"Gentiles be fulfilled. Verily I say unto you, *This* "*generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.* "*Heaven and earth shall pass away: But my words* "*shall not pass away.*" (Luke xxi, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 32, 33.) In the above predictions concerning Jerusalem, so circumstantially detailed, and so immutably *then* predetermined, there are *two* essential appendages of those events left out of view, viz. the *precise time of the approach* of the Roman armies; and the *duration* of the calamities which they were to inflict. Both of which appendant circumstances, Christ thus in Matthew distinctly impressed upon his hearers. "But pray ye, that your flight be not in the "*winter*, neither on the *sabbath day.*" (Matthew xxiv, 20.) "And except those days should be "shortened, there should no flesh be saved: But for "the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened." (verse 22.) Nothing therefore is plainer as to the approach of the Roman armies to Jerusalem, and their continuance in warfare in Judea, than that the former was a *contingent* event, and the latter one, concerning which, the divine *purpose was altered.* Pray that your flight be not in the winter. "They did thus "pray, and their flight was in the spring." (Wesley.) And according to Eusebius, their place of retreat and security, was to Pella beyond Jordan. "This direc- "tion which was given by Jesus himself, may afford "us great comfort. For it shews, that notwithstand- "ing afflictions befal us, by the decree of God, the "circumstances of them may be mitigated by our "prayers." (Macknight.) And as the prayers of

the saints, availed to the diminishing of their dangers and sufferings in their flight from Jesusalem: so for their sakes, like so many Lots, escaping from destruction, the continuance of the impending danger is shortened, probably through the prayers of Christ himself. This shortening of an implied primary decree, in respect of duration of calamity, by a secondary restricting decree, the evangelist Mark, thus records, "And except that the Lord had shortened "those days, no flesh should be saved: But for the "elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shorten-"ed the days."* (XIII, 20, 21.) The important doctrine of variable and conditional circumstances being actually appendant on events most certainly predestinated, having been thus firmly established by the cogent evidence of *three scripturally attested facts;* leads directly to the unavoidable conclusion, that the Calvinistick doctrine of an unchangable foreordination of whatsoever comes to pass, is neither a scriptural nor a true doctrine; but one originating from a misconception of the holy scriptures, through that fallibility, which may mislead good and wise men, when once unhappily yoked up in the trammels of some popular sect leader; whose every dogma demands implicit belief, and his every errour adoration.

It is sir, only in consequence of such a blinding influence, that an eternal and immutable predestination of all things which happen, is infered from Matthew x, 29, 30, 31. "Are not two sparrows sold for one

* See note second at the end of the Letters.

"farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the "ground without your Father. But the very hairs of "your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, "ye are of more value than many sparrows." In this passage, the superintending providence, and not the eternal decrees of God are here declared. No mention is made, or intimation given of an eternal decree, how many sparrows should exist throughout all time, or when and where, each should fall through every age; but simply, a present superintending agency, affording each support and protection, and likewise the same support and protection to Christ's disciples, the hairs of whose heads were then all known by number. But no intimation was made, when this numbering took place, whether during, or before their formation in the "lower parts of the earth." Psalm CXXXIX, 15. There was indeed no necessity for such decrees to be formed before old time, in order to regulate each minutia of the divine conduct in ruling the world through all succeeding ages. For, "will any man say, that "God was wiser before the creation, than since? Or "had he more leisure, that he should take that oppor- "tunity to settle his affairs, and make rules for him- "self, from which he never was to vary? He has "doubtless the same wisdom, and all the perfections at "this day, which he had from eternity. His under- "standing being always equally clear and bright, and "his wisdom equally infallible." (John Wesley.)

LETTER XVII.

SIR,

HAVING unquestionably wearied your patience, in the preceding letters, I have now for your relief to promise, that this Letter on Election, with the notes which follow, shall terminate this unwelcome series of communication.

ELECTION.

This doctrine, as taught by both Calvinisms, is considered by all who truly understand it, as necessarily involving and implying therein, the *belief* of an unconditional efficacious election to eternal salvation and glory of a circumscribed definite portion of mankind termed the elect; and an absolute, unconditional, and irrevocable consignment to remediless and eternal destruction and misery, of all the other portion of mankind called *reprobates*, or the *non-elect*. The *leading question* therefore, in our present enquiry *is*, do the holy scriptures any where, teach any doctrine concerning election, which in any wise, will warrant this Calvinistick construction of this scriptural term.* In resorting then, to the holy scriptures, for the solution of this interesting point, we will commence our researches in the Old Testament, as exhibiting the *root* of election, and endeavour in the New Testament, to

* Chose, chosen, and predestinated, are terms, not unfrequently used as synonymous with elect, elected, &c.

trace the development of its branches. We begin therefore with Genesis xxv, 23. "And the Lord said "unto her, (Rebekah) two nations are in thy womb, "and two manner of people shall be separated from thy "bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the "other people, and the elder shall serve the younger." To this text, the prophet Malichi affords a most elucidating comment, viz. "Was not Esau Jacob's "brother? Saith the Lord: Yet, I loved Jacob, and "hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage "waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas "*Edom* saith we are impoverished, but we will return "and build the desolate places: Thus saith the Lord "of hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down, "&c." (Chapter 1, 2, 3, verse 4.) From this unerring comment, as well as from the original text itself, it most indubitably results, that *Edom* and not Esau, and the Israelites and not Jacob, were intended in the declaration to Rebekah. And as this love to Jacob, and hatred to Esau, respected *more* their posterity than themselves; so it is clearly manifest that the operation of this love and hatred, extended not into eternity, but was restricted to the present life. This *love* operated in the election of Israel, to the inheritance of the land of Canaan, and in due time, to become the visible church, through many generations. Whilst this *hatred* produced the exclusion of the Edomites, both from the land of promise, and from the covenant which God made with the descendants of Jacob at Horeb; (mentioned in Joshua v, 3, 4, 5) and also subjected them to signal providential corrections

inflicted on them, in "laying their heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness." And in these senses only, it was, that St. Paul in the ninth of Romans, refered to the fore cited texts in Genesis, and Malichi; and hence, these passages "Serve as a key to explain "the Epistle to the Romans, where the words are "quoted; and prove to a demonstration, that they "mean *only* God's bestowing greater temporal favours, "and higher opportunities of knowing, and doing the "divine will upon some men, than he does upon oth-"ers: And that, *merely* according to his own pur-"pose; without any regard to their merits, or demer-"its; as having a right to confer greater or smaller "degrees of perfection on whom he pleases." But "the doctrine of unconditional election to eternal "life; or, of unconditional reprobation to eternal "death, cannot be supported by the example of God's "dealings with Esau or Jacob; or, with the Edom-"ites and Israelites." (Doctor Dodd.)

And with this instructive commentary on the divine dealings with Jacob and Esau, strikingly correspond the following observations on Romans IX, 13, by a candid and pious Calvinist. "It is *certain* the apostle "does not here speak of the eternal state of Jacob and "Esau, (whatever some may suppose deducible from "what he says,) nor does he indeed, so much speak "of their persons, as of their posterity." "*God's lay-*"*ing waste the heritage of the Edomites, for the* "*dragons of the wilderness*, is so different a thing "from his appointing the *person of Esau to eternal* "*misery*, by a mere act of sovereignty without regard

"to any thing done, or to be done by him to deserve "it, that I will rather submit to any *censure* by my "fellow servants, than deal so freely with my Maker, "as to conclude the one from the other."* (Doctor Doddridge.) This subject of Jacob's election, and Esua's reprobation, I shall here conclude in the words of Adam Clarke. "After long reprobation, the *Edom-* "*ites* were incorporated among the Jews, and have "ever since been undistinguishable in the Jewish "church. The Jews, on the contrary, the *elect of* "*God*, having been cut off and *reprobated*, and con- "tinued so to this day. If a time should ever come "when the Jews shall all believe in Christ Jesus, "(which is a general opinion) then the Edomites, who "are now absorded amongst them, shall also become "the *elect*. And even now, Isaac finds both his "children within the pale of the Jewish Church, equal- "ly entitled to the promises of salvation, by Christ "Jesus, of whom he was the most expressive, and il- "lustrious type."

Election we next discover in Deuteronomy, "For "thou art a *holy people* unto the Lord thy God: The "Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a *special* peo- "ple unto himself, above all people that are upon the "face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love "upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more "in number than any people; for ye were the fewest "of all people. But because the Lord loved you, and "because he would keep the oath which he had sworn

* See note fourth, at the end of the Letters.

"unto your fathers." "Only the Lord had a delight "in thy fathers, to love them, and he *chose* (that is "elected) their seed after them, even you above all "people, as at this day. Circumcise therefore, the "foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked." "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of "their heart, dost thou go to possess their land, but "for the wickedness of those nations, the Lord thy "God doth drive them out from before thee, and that "he may perform the word which the Lord sware un-"to thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Under-"stand therefore, that the Lord thy God, giveth thee "not this good land to possess it for thy righteous-"ness; for thou art a stiff necked people." (Deuteronomy VII, 6, 7, 8, X, 15, 16, IX, 5, 6.) The first of these passages as implying election, is in the New Testament transfered to the christian church. "*A* "*special people*, in the Septuagint, *a peculiar people*, "a private property. The words as they stand in the "Septuagint, are quoted by the apostle, 1 Peter II, 9. (Clarke.) The Israelite Church is here called *a holy people*, as well as a *peculiar people*, and yet are declared to be *a stiff necked* people. It hence is undeniable, that their saintship consisted more in external separation and profession, than in real holiness: And therefore are called upon *to circumcise their hearts.* But still there were really holy persons amongst them, even a Moses, an Aaron, a Caleb, a Joshua, and many others. And in this sense it was, that Peter in writing an epistle to a number of Churches, composed of the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia,

Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia," terms them *elect*, and calls them "*a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, &c.*" For the Churches in Galatia, were unquestionably greatly undeserving of these high encomiums, *except* in this restricted sense. For "It is remarkable (says Macknight,) that the Churches of Galatia, are not, as the other churches to which "Paul wrote, designed the *churches of God, or of* "*Christ*, perhaps to signify that they did not deserve "these honourable appellations, on account of their "great defection from the truth of the gospel." But, as from the New Testament itself, there is an overwhelming evidence, that the christian churches generally and greatly, resembled the Jewish church in disorderly deportment, and in the existence of vicious members, in their respective communities; and, as Christ most explicitly, in his parables of the tares, and of the gospel net taught, that such persons and things, were unavoidable in his churches. Therefore, in borrowing these titles from the Jewish church, of *holy people*, *peculiar* people, *chosen*, or *elect*, and transferring them with other titles of *sanctified*, *called to be saints*, &c. to whole communities of professed christians. No apostle had any evangelical warrant for so doing, except, in the restricted sense of saintship by profession, in visible covenant relationship to God, through Christ: But still with a well grounded presumption that real saints, and heirs of life eternal, though personally unknown are amongst them; unless such apostle were endued with a special revelation assuring him of the actual heirship of each individual.

And therefore, in this qualified and restricted *sense* it was, that Paul writing to the carnal church at Corinth, styled them "*The Church of God at Corinth*, sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, &c." And thus also, the same apostle writing to persons whom he had never seen, says, "Ye also are the called of Jesus Christ: To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." (Romans 1, 6, 7.) But not needlessly to multiply examples, I shall close them here by instancing 1 Thesalonians 1, 4. "Knowing "brethren beloved, *your election* of God." "Your "election. This being said to the whole church of "the Thessalonians, cannot be understood of the elec- "tion of every individual to *eternal life*. For there "were among them some who walked disorderly, "2 Thesalonians III, 11, concerning whom, the "apostle doubted whether they would obey his pre- "cepts, Chapter 1, Thessalonisns v, 14. Besides "the election of the Thessalonians, was such, as left "the apostle room to fear, lest the tempter might have "tempted them so effectually, as to make his labour "among them fruitless. Chapter III, 5. But such "a fear was not consistent with the apostle's knowl- "edge of their election to eternal life. *The election* "here spoken of, is that which Moses has described. "Deuteronomy VII, 6. *The Lord thy God hath* "*chosen* (elected) *thee to be a special people to him-* "*self, above all people* that are upon the face of the "earth." (Macknight.) This election of Israel, as the *root* of the good olive tree in the Old Testament, which thus *shoots its branches* into the elected church-

es, composed both of Jews and Gentiles, in the New Testament, we will now consider in other interesting points of view.

This election of Israel, into a state of separation unto God, although not for their worthiness, but for the love which God bore to them and to their fathers, yet terminated not in themselves alone; but, through them extended benefit to the surrounding nations, for having committed to their keeping, the knowledge and worship of the true God; they while obedient, were as a *city set on a hill;* and when disobedient, they, through exemplary punishment, were made to serve as a Lot's wife, to the Gentile nations. And as in this manner formerly, so now in their present dispersion, God by them, is accomplishing his ancient promise unto Jacob, that in him, should all *the families of the earth be blessed.* Genesis xxviii, 14. So that this election was designed as a blessing to the non-elect, although not in the same manner or degree, as to the elect themselves. And another circumstance no less deserving of attention, is, that when the elect obtained the inheritance of the reprobate Amorites and others, *whom the land spued out of its mouth,* the reason was *not* because the *former* deserved it, but because they were *less* wicked than the *latter.* From all which we learn, that a *mere* exercise of sovereign authority, wholly independent of wise, gracious, and equitable motives, is not the basis of God's elective and reprobating decrees, which are ever founded upon immutable reasons of righteousness, in the unerring mind of *deity himself.*

Elect, is a distinguishing appellation confered by the Father upon his Son Christ. "Behold my ser-"vant, whom I uphold; mine *elect*, in whom my "soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he "shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles." Isaiah XLII, 1. Christ appears here as an elected builder, to rear unto God, a church, not merely of Jewish descent, but also, of Gentile converts; and whilst Christ was to be the builder of this church, so he was also appointed as its foundation. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation." Isaiah XXVIII, 16. And in Psalm CXVIII, 22, he is thus spoken of: "The stone which the builders refused, is become the head stone of the corner." Wherefore in commenting on the whole, St. Peter styles Christ a *chosen* foundation, and an *elect* corner stone. As the Redeemer was thus elected to rear an edifice, of which he was to be himself both heir and owner; so, under master builders were elected, to be co-workers together with him, in conducting the various parts of this vast superstructure. Moses, Aaron, and all the prophets had their several allotments. John the Baptist, had his part divinely assigned to him, even before he was born. Paul was separated thereunto from his mother's womb. And the twelve did not choose Christ: But Christ chose, ordained and sent them forth to their respective labours. But these elections, *did not* imply Calvinistick reprobations. Christ was elected, and sent into the world, *not to condemn the world*, but that the world *through him might be saved*.

Moses and the prophets were elected to warn sinners to escape the place of torments, into which, the rich man plunged himself, by disregarding their admonitions. John the Baptist, could not prevail on Judas to forsake his covetousness, wherefore, he at length sold his master to the high priests for the price of the potter's field. And Herod, and the rulers and Jews, *not being baptized* with the baptism of John, *thereby rejected the counsel* of God against themselves, and adding to this, an utter rejection of Christ's ministry and person, thereby finally reprobated themselves. The *election* of Paul, and the other apostles, was *not* to shut the doors of mercy, to a world of sinners: but, going forth into all the world, and preaching the *gospel* unto *every creature*, they were as *ambassadors* to *beseech sinners* in *Christ's stead* to *be reconciled* unto God. And as Christ had *elected labourers* in that age, so he has had through every age, and still has elected messengers, who still warn sinners to flee from the wrath to come; and to fly for refuge unto Christ the only Saviour. So that none of these elections, whether of Jacob, of the Jewish church, of Christ, of his Prophets or Apostles, or inferiour preachers, or ministers, even to the present day, have any thing whatsoever of Calvinistick reprobation contained in them for the non elect, *but* the contrary; for all these persons and communities are thus elected, in order that others, *not so elected*, may be stirred up to emulation, and be so provoked to a holy jealousy, as to seek salvation, that they may *not perish*, but ob-

tain mercy and eternal life, through him who hath loved, and given himself for them.

Particular Election, and its Satelite Unconditional Reprobation. We are now sir, to attempt a candid examination of those New Testament texts, whereon Calvinistick election, with its inseparable attendant unconditional reprobation are supposed most securely to rest. And of which description are all those which indicate a *purpose* of election, formed before the foundation of the world; such as Titus 1, 1, 2, 3, 4. 2 Timothy 1, 9. Ephesians III, 11. Also 1 chapter 4, 5, 10, 11, verses. Romans VIII, 29, 30. And also 1 Peter 1, 2. Beginning here, with the first in order, we shall in like manner so proceed to the end. "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus "Christ, *according to the faith of God's elect*, and the "acknowledging of the truth which is after godliness. "In hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, "promised before the world began. But hath in due "times manifested his word through preaching, which "is committed unto me, according to the command-"ment of God our Saviour. To Titus mine own son "after the *common faith*, &c. "The phrase *an apostle according* to the *faith of God's elect*, if correct, would signify that St. Paul became an apostle, in answer to the praying faith of the church, even as the blind men, mentioned in Matthew obtained sight by their faith, viz. "*According to your faith*, be it unto you." IX, 29; but this signification being contrary to truth, the phrase consequently is erroneous. Macknight renders it "In order to the faith of the elect," and ex-

plains it to mean "An apostle of Jesus Christ sent forth by him, *in order* to promote the faith of the Gentiles, the elected people of God." And this exposition of St. Paul's mission, *being*, to preach the *gospel faith* to the Gentiles as elected of God, is powerfully sanctioned by a variety of collateral evidence. It perfectly agrees with Paul's commission as the apostle to the Gentiles. It corresponds with his strenuous vindication of the election of the Gentiles, even to the exclusion of the unbelieving Jews. And yet above all other proofs, it is substantiated by the forecited clause in the fourth verse, "Mine own son after the *common* faith." This *faith* therefore, is the same as that mentioned in Jude 3, viz. "The faith which was once delivered unto the saints." And this faith is identically that, which Paul himself thus preached to the Corinthian Gentiles, viz. "Moreover brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians xv, 1, 2, 3, 4.) This faith therefore, was not a *private* and *special* one, but was a publick and common faith. And the election accompanying it, was neither unconditional nor absolute, but was conditional, both in respect to justification here, and to eternal salvation in the

life to come; for neither Jew nor Gentile sinner, had any claim to divine acceptance, until they believed with hearts unto righteousness; as saith the gospel, "He that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the *wrath* of God abideth on him." John III, 36. And after having believed, continuance, or *perseverance* in faith was indispensable in order to the attainment of eternal life, even as saith St. Paul. "*Take* "*heed brethren*, lest there be in any of you an evil "heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called to "day, lest any of you be hardened through the de- "ceitfulness of sin. For we are made *(final)* parta- "kers of Christ, *if we hold* the beginning of our con- "fidence, *steadfast unto the end.*" And as this gospel faith, being thus conditional, was not the faith of Calvinistick election, so neither was it that of Calvinistick reprobation, for the faith of the gospel by the *express* commandment of Christ himself, *is ever conditional* both to elect and reprobates; for he said unto the twelve, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the "gospel unto every creature. He that *believeth* and "is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth "not shall be damned." Mark XVI, 15, 16. And in this most authoritative text, we have unfolded to us, the true nature of God's eternal purpose, concerning the final conditions of all men, to whom the gospel is preached. Election to life eternal, was *purposed* towards all obedient believers, and perdition *was designed* as the reward of impenitence and unbelief. And from this *conditionality* of the eternal purpose,

results moral freedom, and that accountability, which renders all men responsible to the decisions of the judgment day.

Second. "Who hath saved us, and called us, with "an holy calling, not according to our works, but ac- "cording to his own purpose and grace, which was "given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." Although there is a close affinity betwixt this passage, and that already considered from Titus, yet, there are some particulars in this, not so immediately expressed or included in the former. These shades of difference may be comprised under three heads. First. An holy calling. Second. Called not according to works. And third. This calling was according to a purpose before the world began, thereby confering grace as a gift through Christ.

First. An holy calling. Why the invitations and calling of the gospel are denominated *an holy calling*, is a circumstance in itself, plainly manifest, viz. because the gospel affords to mankind, through means of its instructions, its motives, its discipline, and its attendant spiritual influences, the most powerful inducements and opportunities of becoming truly holy in heart, life and conversation. And with this well accords the words of Peter, "As he who hath *called* you is *holy*, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." The calling by the gospel to repentance and holiness, and to partake of the hallowed privileges of the christian church, was in the appointed, and accepted time of the apostles ministry, a calling common, and free, for both Jews and Gentiles, as saith Paul,

"Even us whom he hath called, (to be his church,) "not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. As "he hath said also in Osee, I will call them *my people* "which *were not my people;* and her beloved, which "was not beloved." Romans IX, 24, 25. But as the *disobedient* Jews, through means of unbelief, lost their birth right, to all the privileges of this high and holy calling; so, the called and believing Gentiles, were reminded that they stood only by faith, and were admonished not to be high minded, but to fear, lest in case of unbelief, the same severity which spared not the natural branches, should also not spare them. The methods of divine dealing, were alike impartial to all who were "the called." Perseverance in faith and love, terminated in eternal salvation; and the contrary rendered this calling abortive. And hence said Jesus Christ, "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" Matthew XXII, 14.

Second. "Called not according to works." As Abraham had performed no works previously to his being called, meriting that high honour, nor yet his Son Isaac, nor his Grandson Jacob, whereby either could have deserved the favours bestowed respectively on them: so neither had the Gentiles performed any works meriting the favour confered on them, when called in the apostolick age to partake of the unsearchable riches of the gospel. But notwithstanding this, still, as *faith* on the part of the spared remnant of the Jews was *indispensable*, in order to their *not* being broken off from the *good olive tree;* so, in like manner, when the gospel was gratuitously tendered to the

Gentiles, *faith* on their part, accepting of and obeying the holy calling, was *indispensably essential* in order to their salvation: and a credible profession of faith, was *no less essential* to their being visibly grafted in amongst the remaining branches of the good olive.

Third. This *calling* was according to a *purpose*, confering *grace* and given in Christ *before the world began*. This latter clause, "before the world began," is also contained in Titus 1, 2, and was designedly reserved for consideration of it in this place. Macknight in his literal translation, renders it, "before the times of the ages." And in justification of his departure from the present version, he observes thus; "Sup-"posing the *Greek* word in this clause to signify *eter-*"*nal*, the literal translation of the passage would be, "*before eternal times*. But that being a contradic-"tion in terms, our translators, contrary to the propri-"ety of the Greek language, have rendered it, before "the world began." And in respect to the *grace then given* in Christ, he considers it as "that, which was given to *all mankind* after the fall, in the promise that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent." Nor can this comment be refuted with facility, until such time as St. Paul's testimony becomes unworthy of belief. For discoursing on the subject of *grace* or *favour* divinely confered on mankind through Christ, "before the times of the ages," which gave birth to the descendants of Adam, he thus asserted, that "Not as the offence, so also is the *free* "*gift*. For if through the offence of one many be "dead, *much more the grace* of God and the *gift* by

"*grace*, by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded "unto many." "For the judgment was by one to "condemnation, but the *free gift* is of many offences "to justification." "Therefore, as by the offence of "one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, "even so, by the righteousness of one, the *free gift* "came upon all men unto justification of life." Romans v, 15, 16, 18. Should any doubt arise whether "the *gift by grace* by one man *Jesus Christ*," here mentioned in Romans; and, the "*purpose* and *grace* given us in *Christ Jesus*," as mentioned in 2 Timothy, 1, 9, are *one* and the *same* divine bestowment of grace? it will need only to be duly remembered, that these several epistles were written by *one* and the *same* divinely inspired writer; and then, from such consideration will result so *high* a *degree* of *probability*, as will render its denial in no small degree unreasonable. But as some readers may, notwithstanding, dissent herefrom, and alledge that the grace mentioned in Romans, is only "common grace," given to all men, but that the "grace" mentioned in Timothy is "special grace," and given only to the saints. To such objection, if made, I would reply, that the holy scriptures make no such distinctions as those of *common grace*, and *special grace*. But it is most certainly true that they most explicitly teach, that "the grace of God which bringeth *salvation*, hath appeared to all men." Titus II, 11. That God is "not willing that *any should perish*, but that *all* should "*come to repentance*." 2 Peter, III, 9. And that they exhort us to pray for *all men*, because "this is good

"and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come "unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one "God, and one Mediator between God and men, the "man Christ Jesus: Who gave himself a ransom for "*all.*" 1 Timothy, II, 3, 4, 5, 6. But although, thus most clearly manifest, that there is no sufficient ground for "special grace," and "special calling," in the Calvinistick exclusive and monopolizing meaning of those terms: yet, there are real scriptural distinctions of divine favour and grace, and which never should be forgotten. These distinctions we are most correctly taught by Christ himself, in his instructive parable of the talents. For therein we are informed of the diversity of grace and favour divinely confered on mankind, under the emblems of one, two, and five talents. Applying then this evangelical key, to unlock the hidden mysteries of the divine *purpose* of *grace* in Eden, we thereby, in the first instance, perceive one talent of *grace* and *holy calling* confered on the antediluvians, and on the Gentiles; whereby through the law written on their hearts, the teachings of tradition, and the light of reason, aided by the strivings of the spirit, they were divinely taught to fear God and become workers of righteousness. Secondly, we discover the purpose formed of confering two talents upon the descendants of Abraham, in the covenant of circumcision, and in the holy calling to become God's peculiar and special people. And lastly, we behold the purpose unfolded in the gospel "due times," of imparting the five talents of grace and holy calling to

the believing remnant of Jews, and to the multitude of believing Gentiles, who should accept the gospel offers of salvation to life eternal.

Text third. "According to the eternal purpose "which he purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord." "As he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation "of the world, that we should be holy, and without "blame before him in love." "Having predestinated "us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to "himself, according to the good pleasure of himself." "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, he "might gather together in one, all things in Christ, "both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, "even in him who worketh all things after the coun-"sel of his own will."

In these passages we behold a divine purpose declared, resulting alone from the counsel of God's own will. Its origin was from before the foundation of the world. Its operation was the predestinating through Christ, an adoption of children to be effected in the dispensation of the fulness of times. And its final issue, the gathering together in one, of all things in Christ; both of things which are in heaven, and which are in earth.

In the scriptures on election heretofore considered, we descried this same system gradually unfolding. In the substitution of a second Adam in place of the first, we recognised its character to be that of mercy. And in abounding grace through Christ, more than compensating for all losses sustained through a first parent's transgression, we beheld its increased devel-

opment. This abounding grace operated in the distribution of talents to Gentiles, Jews and christians, during the ages of their respective dispensations. These talents confered without respect to previous deservings, we beheld were committed in trust, under the responsibility to the possessor, of *accountability* in a day of future judgment and of righteous retribution.

But, in order duly to effect this *purposed* or *predestinated* exhibition of *retributive* justice, *manifold* wisdom, and *abounding* grace and mercy, through the interposition of the Lord Jesus Christ; it behooved him to suffer upon the cross, to arise from the dead, and ascending and entering into his glory, to give commandment to his apostles and ministers to preach the gospel in his name, throughout all the world, unto every creature. Pursuing this subject to its final, *revealed* issue, we are led progressively through other scriptures, to a *point* in duration, in which *glory* crowns in *eternity*, the *efforts* which *grace* unceasingly had made during the lapse of the *ages* in *time*. For in those scriptures we are informed of the wicked being put down, the righteous being exalted, of Christ reigning to complete victory, and having reconciled (or united) all things to himself as the head, to become himself subjected to the Father, that God may be *all* in *all*. But on these points these scriptures will speak best for themselves. "And being found in fashion as "a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient "unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a "name which is above every name: That at the name

"of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heav-
"en, and things in earth, and things under the earth:
"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus
"Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Fath-
"er." Phillippians II, 8, 9, 10, 11. "For it pleased
"the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. And
"having made peace by the blood of his cross, by
"him to reconcile all things to himself; by him, I
"say, whether they be things in earth, or things in
"heaven." Colossians I, 19, 20. "Then cometh
"the end, when he shall have delivered up the king-
"dom to God, even the Father; when he shall have
"put down all rule, and all authority and power. For
"he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his
"feet." "And when all things shall be subdued un-
"to him, then shall the Son also himself be subject
"unto him, that put all things under him, that God
"may be all in all." 1 Corinthians, XV, 24, 25, 28.

But in this revealed result of this divine predestinating purpose, nothing whatsoever is discoverable, from whence, to infer the Calvinistick decree of reprobation.* And when we shall duly have attended to

* From the forecited connection of texts, resulting as before stated, in the *subjection* of all things to God, some writers seem confidently to infer, a final restoration of all mankind, and even of the fallen angels, to divine favour and consequent felicity. But, before confidence is reposed in conclusions thus infered, it would be but prudent, to weigh well, and with calm deliberation to consider, how such final restoration, and salvation, can ever consist or harmonize with Christ's declaration, concerning a blasphemy, which never hath forgiveness? With the

another revealed purpose, *secondary* and *subservient* to the grand design, of *reconciling* all things to Christ, as their head; we shall then perhaps, discover as much reason, to call in question the propriety of infering Calvinistick election, from the fore mentioned texts, cited from Ephesians, as we did from those last quoted from Colossians and 1 Corinthians.

This *other* revealed divine purpose, occurs in Ephesians III, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 verses. "For this "cause, I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, for you "Gentiles. If ye have heard of this dispensation of "the grace of God, which is given me to you ward; "how that by revelation, he made known unto me "the mystery, (as I wrote a foretime in few words, "whereby when ye read, ye may understand *my* "*knowledge* in the mystery of Christ,) which in other "ages, was not made known unto the sons of men, "as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and "prophets, by the spirit; *that the Gentiles, should* "*be fellow heirs of the same body, and partakers of* "*his promise in Christ, by the gospel.*"

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torments of fire unquenchable, and a never dying worm? With the loss of the soul? or of body and soul, being liable to destruction in hell fire? And of suffering, by paying the uttermost farthing? Or how consist with such hardness, as renders a renewal to repentance *impossible?* Or yet, how accord with *perishing utterly* in their *own corruption?* Or yet again, with their *last end* being, that of being burned?

Reader, canst thou reconcile these contrarieties? And without reconciling them, wilt thou volunteer in the belief of contradictions?

If in this place, due attention is paid, to the apostles *design* in thus writing, as well as to what he *has* here written, it will tend to diffuse great light over the main subject of our inquiries. The doctrine of the cross in that age, was to the Jews, a stumbling block, and to the Greek's, foolishness. And the uniting of *both* by one Church, into one body, to the former, was a *most offensive innovation;* and to the latter, a *ridiculous novelty.* Paul, as the Apostle to the Gentiles perceived and felt, in a very peculiar manner, the great difficulties arising from these Jewish prejudices on the one hand, and from this gentile ignorance upon the other. Hence, he had here in view, to endeavour to overcome these prejudices, and to dispel this ignorance. And in order to effect this design, he conceded to both parties, that their union into one church, had been a *mystery*, hidden from the sons of men, in the preceding ages, but maintained, that it was *now* no longer so; because, it was revealed by the spirit, to the holy apostles and prophets; and asserted, that it was also revealed to him, as well as to them, "That "the Gentiles should be fellow heirs of the same body, "(with the Jews,) and partakers of his (God's) prom-"ise in Christ, by the gospel." And of this, he had "*written a foretime in few words,*" viz. in Chapter 1, 9, 10, 11 verses. "Having made known to us "the mystery of his will, according to his good pleas-"ure, which he hath purposed in himself: That, in "the dispensation of the fullness of times, he might "gather together in one, all things in Christ, both "which are in heaven, and which are in earth, even in

"him: In whom we have obtained an inheritance, be-"ing *predestinated* according to the *purpose* of him, "who worketh all things, according to the counsel of "his own will." We have here then, most manifestly, a key furnished us by St. Paul himself, whereby to unlock the otherwise hidden meaning of the terms mystery, chosen, purpose, and predestination, as used by him, in this epistle to the Ephesian church. And which meaning thus unfolded, instructed the professing believers, in Ephesus, both Jews and Gentiles, that they as a church, in its *collective* capacity, were chosen and predestinated, together with the other churches of that, and of succeeding ages, to partake (as several parts of the same body,) of the promise of salvation, through Christ, as revealed in the gospel. Such election and predestination as *this*, which thus is taught by the apostle, accorded indeed well with the true spirit, and real character of the gospel. For it debarred none from a possibility of obtaining salvation; whilst to innumerable millions, it communicated greatly increased powers and opportunities, to lay hold upon life eternal; for by confering on them the advantages of gospel *instructions*, *means*, *influences*, and *ordinances*, it thereby elevated them into the most favoured condition, of an endowment with the *five talents*. And herewith agrees the following comment, by a judicious writer on this subject. "This election "doth import rather their being *chosen* to the enjoy-"ment of the *means* of grace, *than* to a *certainty* of "being saved by those means; that it is *only* that, "which puts them into a capacity of having all the

"privileges and blessings which God hath promised "to his church and people, *rather, than* under any "absolute assurance of their salvation; or, of any such "grace as shall infallibly, and without any possibility "of frustration, procure their salvation." (Whitby.) But in chapter 1; verses 4, 5, (now under consideration,) the apostle further adds, "He hath chosen us "in him, before the foundation of the world, that we "should be *holy* and *without blame*, before *him in* "*love*. Having predestinated us, unto the *adoption* of "children, by Jesus Christ to himself." And as a key, to open the way to a correct understanding of this passage, the tenth verse of the next chapter thus offers itself. "For we are his workmanship, created in "Christ Jesus, unto *good works*, which God hath *be*-"*fore ordained* that we should walk in them." The incorporation of Jews and Gentiles into one body, both in the church at Ephesus, and in all other christian churches of that age, was God's *act*, in respect to his having appointed it, and hence the Gentiles as grafted in, and made to grow up, both in numbers and knowledge, into one great society, with the remnant of Abraham's descendants, were therefore, God's *creation* by Christ, as their declared head and law giver. But although this was predestinated, yet, the predestination was *not* absolute, *but* conditional, for it was as really predestinated that they should *walk* in the performance of *good works*, and "be *without blame*, before God in *love*," as, that they should be incorporated into one body of professed christians, through the *adoption* of the Gentiles, into the privileges of God's

children. And as we well know, that great *disorders* in life and conversation, and a great *defect* in love, were but too apparent and prevalent in many of the churches of that age: so it is also no less evident, that even this church soon after, became blameable in leaving "their first love." Revelations II, 4. And even St. Paul himself, thus affirmed; "Of your own selves "shall men arise, speaking *perverse things*, to draw "away disciples after them." Acts xx, 30. And from this *conditionality* of predestinated *unblameableness in love*, and *walking* in *good* works, it most indubitably follows, that this whole predestination, although absolute as to ages and generations, yet in respect to *individuals*, was conditional. God had irrevocably decreed, that the impenitent Jews, with their posterity, should be cut off from the good olive tree, "until the fullness of the Gentiles, become in;" at which period in the latter days by a new covenant, all Israel, of that generation, shall be saved, by an unconditional decree.* But whilst the almighty ruler, thus punished the murderous generation, which had rejected Christ, and his gospel: He gratuitously continued the *birthright*, of being God's visible church, to the believing remnant; and in order to the forwarding of the *grand* purpose of uniting all things to Christ, that in the final issue, all things should be subdued unto the Father himself. He unbarred the doors of

* See this subject at large, in Romans xi, 25, 26, 27. Jeremiah xxxi, 31, to the end of the chapter. And in Ezekiel xxxvi, 22, to the end of the chapter.

the church, now enriched with the spiritual powers, and privileges of the gospel, to all Gentiles and their posterity, making a credible and publick profession of their faith in the Saviour. And whilst Deity, by his holy providence, effected his decrees concerning the Gentiles, by thus *adopting* them into his family of the *houshold* faith.* Galatians VI, 10. So his purpose extending *conditionally*, beyond mere *credible* faith, and its right of *adoption* into church membership and ordinances; it becomes further effected in other events and their consequences. For as actual and genuine faith, produces not merely a ceremonial, but a spiritual adoption into real sonship; so a faithful continuance in obedient love, terminated agreeably to apostolick

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* Macknight, although so *generally* and so *critically* correct, yet appears in some degree incorrect, in respect to the true meaning of the term *adoption*. "The Jews (he says,) were "God's Son's, because they sprang from Isaac, who was called "God's son, on account of his supernatural procreation. They "had this appellation also, because they were God's visible "church and people. Hence, the *adoption* is mentioned, as one "of their *natural* privileges." Johnson defines the act of adoption, to be "To take a son by *choice*, to make him a son, who *was not so* by *birth*." If therefore, this definition be correct, *adoption* is *not* a natural, *but is a confered* privilege. And in this view, *Jacob*, *rather* than Isaac, was the medium of adoption to Israel. For Jacob was *adopted* in preference to his elder, *legitimate* brother Esau: Whereas if the adoption had been from Isaac by *natural privilege*, Esau would have obtained it. And by this analogy, the induction of the Gentiles into Israel's family was most strictly an *adoption*; for it was not confered by *nature*, but by *divine choice*.

teaching, in the attainment of an eternal and incorruptible inheritance in glory. This was taught by St. Peter thus; "Blessed be the God and Father of our "Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant "mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and "that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Epistle, 1, 3, 4.

And St. Paul not only confirms this doctrine, but informs more fully for whom this inheritance is reserved; and also who were precluded, and the reason of their rejection, viz. "Who will render to every man "according to his deeds: To them, who by patient "continuance in well doing, seek for glory, and hon- "our, and immortality; eternal life: But unto them "that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but "obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath: Trib- "ulation and anguish upon every soul of man that "doeth evil; of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile: "But glory, honour and peace, to every man that "worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the "Gentile: For there is no respect of persons with "God." Romans 11, 6—11.

This therefore, and *not* Calvinistick election or reprobation, being the genuine result of the scripture doctrines contained in the foregoing third constellation of texts, we are now, in the last place, to examine the fourth collection, in respect to these points of both Calvinisms.

"For whom he did foreknow, he also did predesti-
"nate to be conformed to the image of his Son."
"Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also
"called: And whom he called, them he also justifi-
"ed: And whom he justified, them he also glorifi-
"ed." "Elect according to the fore knowledge of
"God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit,
"unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus
"Christ."

It is most clearly manifest that *Election*, as defined by Paul in the *former* texts, and by Peter in the *latter* passage, are identically one and the same election. For divine fore knowledge is the *root* in both. Conformity to Christ, through obedience to divine calls and influence, are the *means*. And eternal salvation, the designed *end* in each. And as these apostles thus cordially harmonized together on these interesting points; so Calvin and Hopkins, in respect to election, harmonized most strictly with each other.

CALVIN. "The *decrees* were not formed in con-
"sequence of any *foresight* of sin or holiness in the
"reprobate or elect."

HOPKINS. "The *elect* are not chosen to salva-
"tion, *rather than others*, because of any moral ex-
"cellence in them, or out of respect to any *foreseen*
"*faith* or *repentance*."

Now sir, in order to gratify your *peculiar taste* for composition, illustration and argument; as well as to elucidate the subject itself now under consideration, I shall here reduce Evangelical Election, and the Election of both Calvinisms, into the form of a *Contrast*.

Evangelical Election.	*Election of both Calvinisms.*
"For whom he did *foreknow*, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." *St. Paul.*	"The *decrees* were *not formed* in consequence of *any foresight* of sin or holiness in the Reprobate or Elect." *John Calvin.*
"Elect according to the *fore knowledge* of God the Father, *through* sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." *St. Peter.*	"The *Elect are not chosen* to salvation *rather than others*, because of any moral excellence in them, or out of respect to any *foreseen faith* or *repentance*." *Samuel Hopkins.*

So glaring are the contradictions betwixt these respective doctrines on election, that a minute discussion of them would be, but a mere trifling upon the subject. And so great are the inconsistences betwixt them, that inferences from that of the apostles, *cannot consistently* be drawn in vindication of *this*, thus maintained by both Calvinisms.

Divine foreknowledge, like all other essential attributes of the Deity, *must necessarily*, *infinitely transcend* the utmost stretch of all finite comprehension. All therefore, who are disposed to indulge very positive assertions, and imaginary speculations, on this delicate and abstruse subject, are ever in danger of bewildering themselves in idle reveries, or of entangling themselves in the grossest absurdities.

It is a position deemed indisputable amongst Calvinists, that the predestinating decrees are the *foundation* or *cause* of the divine foreknowledge. But this tenet is involved in insuperable difficulties. For if predestination and foreknowledge are each eternal, (and Calvinists hold them to be so) and the former be still asserted to be the cause of the latter, thence will follow the inconsistency of an effect, being coeval with its cause, which is an impossibility. But if it be admitted that foreknowledge is not *strictly* eternal, because subsequent to the decrees, but yet not so, as *perceptibly* to fall short of eternal duration; then will follow the palpable absurdity of a limited duration, not being distinguishable from an illimitable one. Nor will these and other difficulties be obviated by the salvo of defining predestination and foreknowledge, to be different *only* as to the *order* of *nature*, but coequal and coeval in respect to the *order* of *duration*: For if coequal and coeval in respect to duration, neither can in any wise originate from the other; or if that were possible, the foreknowledge might as well produce the predestination, as the predestination produce the foreknowledge. Upon this deep and intricate subject,

the safest course is ever, to follow the infallible teachings of the holy scriptures. But Calvinism not only forsook this *sure* guide, but has even dared to act in opposition thereunto. But to this it has been compelled; for as Paul's golden chain of doctrines, now under consideration, exhibits its first link as composed of foreknowledge, and its last of glorification; and as Calvinism ever holds that chain, to be indissolubly strong and binding, and divine foreknowledge to extend to the whole human race, in all their varieties of actions and characters; it of course was constrained, in order to prevent the inevitable conclusion of universal salvation, to transpose the order of St. Paul's links, so, as that predestination should occupy the place of forcknowledge.

The ablest and best commentator on these doctrines of Paul, unquestionably, is Peter. For having *seen* and *read* his epistles, he thus remarks on them. "Ac-"count that the long suffering of our Lord is salva-"tion; even as our beloved brother Paul, also, ac-"cording to the wisdom given unto him, hath written "unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in "them of these things; in which are some things "hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned "and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scrip-"tures, to their own destruction." 2 Epistle III, 15, 16. That Peter here refered very particularly to Romans II, 4, and generally, to *that* whole epistle, can hardly be doubted by any attentive, intelligent and candid reader. And from his fore cited definition of "election, (being) according to fore knowledge, &c."

wherein, he so *expressly* and *particularly harmonized* with Paul, on the same subject; it manifestly amounts to a very strong proof, that he had carefully studied the eighth chapter. And as he considered some parts of Paul's epistles *hard* to be understood, and those *hard parts* dangerous to *unlearned* and *unstable* persons, it therefore *is to be concluded,* that he would elucidate in some degree, those hard parts, and warn mankind, against those errours, to which they might thence, be most exposed. And hence sir, I must conclude, that a very considerable portion of his first chapter, in his second epistle, was occupied in this very manner. A few verses only, I shall here transcribe. "Giving all "diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue "knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to "temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and "to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly "kindness charity. For if these things be in you, "and abound, they make you, that ye shall neither be "barren, nor unfruitful, in the knowledge of our Lord "Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things, is "blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that "he was purged from his old sins. Therefore, the "rather, brethren, *give diligence to make your calling "and election sure; for, if ye do these things,* ye "shall never fall." 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 verses. And whilst these apostolick teachings, thus instruct and admonish us, in respect to things, hard to be understood in Paul's writings; so, they tend likewise, to instruct us, in the true meaning of John x, 27, 28, 29, viz. "*My sheep hear my voice,* and I know them,

"and *they follow me:* And I give unto them eternal "life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any "pluck them out of my hands. My father, who gave "them me, is greater than all; and none is able to "pluck them out of my Father's hands."

Upon a due comparison of this *character* of Christ's sheep, (that they *hear his voice* and *follow him,*) with Peter's *character* of those who *make* their calling and election *sure*, in following the forecited rules laid down by him, when feeding his master's sheep and lambs; we discover not only the *strictest* agreement betwixt the *under* Shepherd, and the *Chief* Shepherd, but we likewise in *both* have exhibited before us, a *concise specimen* of the real nature, and true character of the *genuine* doctrine, of *the perseverance of the saints.* And all sheep and lambs, who faithfully abide in Christ's pastures, and partake with appetite, of the food of doctrine, prepared for them when under sufferings or in danger, will *most assuredly* be kept unto life eternal; for saith this under shepherd, and well instructed apostle, unto all such, "Wherefore, let them "that suffer according to the will of God, *commit* the "*keeping* of their *souls* to him in *well doing*, as unto "a faithful Creator." 1 Peter iv, 19.

And now sir, permit me to assure you, that I am neither your enemy, nor yet an enemy to either Calvinists or Hopkinsians, notwithstanding any liberties here taken with your *contrast*, or, with their respective systems. Should you in these letters (as undoubtedly you will,) discover minor errours, I request you will generously overlook them, as the mere results of

unavoidable infirmity. But, should you ascertain great or dangerous ones, give them no quarter; and you shall have (if really proved to be such,) both my thanks, and hearty approbation. In the numerous quotations made, both from your book and from others, although sometimes I have altered words, and abridged sentences, in order to make them more explicit; yet, I have not in any instance, intentionally or with knowledge, either altered, or impaired the *sense*. But in some few instances, I designedly have strengthened the objection in your favour, and against my own argument. For be assured sir, *victory* is not the object at which I aim; and which, if obtained at the *expense of truth*, I should consider as an event ever deeply to be regretted.

With these impressions, and with sentiments of real esteem, I now sir, respectfully bid you adieu.

NOTE I.

This note refers to Letter XIV, page 201.

On Moral Taste.

LORD Herbert of Cherbury, the first and most distinguished deistical writer in England, in his book entitled *de Veritate*, published in the year 1624 asserted five principles of a universal religion, viz. First. That there is one God. Second. That he should be worshipped. Third. That piety and virtue constitute this worship. Fourth. That repentance procures pardon. And fifth. That human souls are immortal, and will hereafter be rewarded or punished, according to their character and conduct in the present life.

This specious and inconsistent writer, not duly adverting to the indubitable fact, that a clear and distinct knowledge of whatever was strictly correct in his five general principles, was for the most part, derived from the Jewish and Christian scriptures, was, in consequence of this gross oversight, induced to endeavour to invalidate divine revelation, as a thing wholly unnecessary, impossible to be communicated to mankind; and if communicated, yet impossible to be understood by them. He indeed admitted that christianity, although in his opinion thus useless and unnecessary, yet enforced his five principles. From

the crudities of this writer, originated a host of fallacious efforts, to exalt natural religion upon the ruins of that which is contained in the holy scriptures. But these vain men whilst making these insidious attempts, were not duly apprized that their conduct was no less preposterous, than would be that of a man, who, at noon day, should exclude from his house the light of the sun, under the pretence that such light was wholly useless, because that of a lamp or candle was in all cases to be prefered.

An author of this description, endeavouring to elevate the principles of nature above those of religion, and the dictates of emulation, above those of conscience, writes after this manner, viz. "*True honour*, though it be a different principle from religion, "is that which produces the same effects. The lines "of action, though drawn from different parts, terminate in the same point. Religion embraces virtue "as it is enjoined by the laws of God; honour, as it "is graceful and ornamental to human nature. The "religious man *fears*, the man of honour *scorns*, to "do an evil action. The latter considers vice as "something that is beneath him; the former, as something that is offensive to the Divine Being. The "one, as what is unbecoming; the other, as what is "forbidden."

Although it is not explicitly asserted, yet it is clearly manifest, that in the above quotation, *emulation* is represented as consisting in a *sense* of honour, or in a *taste* which relishes things graceful and ornamental. And this propension which may degenerate into the

worst of envyings and strifes, is therein elevated above all the motives and excitements to religion.

But whilst writers of this cast, have scrutinized human nature, in order thereby, if possible, to depress the great sanctions and divine authority of revealed religion: Others, who cannot be justly suspected of being inimical to either of the two testaments, have also examined the internal perceptions, propensions and operations of the human heart and mind: And for the express purpose of *harmonizing* natural with revealed religion; and of further harmonizing the actual moral condition of human nature, with its declared state in the holy scriptures.

The consequences of these researches have been, that, as the scriptures have declared great corruptions of human hearts and manners; so, great corruptions of human hearts and manners have been discovered to be self evident in all ages and nations. But as the scriptures have no where affirmed an universal and total depravity of all mankind, and in all ages; so, no such depravation has been discovered. And as the scriptures of truth affirm a divine law to be written upon the hearts and consciences of all men; so, some traces of it have been found discoverable, even in men, greatly corrupted and vitiated. Whilst in young persons more especially, as well as in many others of more advanced years, a *moral taste* or *relish* for justice, truth, magnanimity, compassion, benevolence, beneficence, gratitude, modest diffidence, chastity, and a reverence and veneration for the Deity, when duly characterized; have been both felt and discovered in

the bosoms of human kind. For mankind, before *personal self* depravation, are not only capable of discerning these moral qualities, but also, of delighting in, and approbating them. How far the following extracts may accord with the foregoing observations, and with the above ideas of a *moral taste* in man, is left to the readers own judgment finally to decide.

"The conclusion in which I wish to rest is, that "the beauty and sublimity which is felt, in the vari- "ous appearances of matter, are finally to be ascribed "to their being the signs of those qualities of mind, "which are fitted by the constitution of our nature, to "affect us with pleasing or interesting emotion." "Had organick enjoyment been the only object of "our formation, it would have been sufficient to es- "tablish senses for the reception of these enjoyments. "But if the promises of our nature are greater, if it is "enabled to look to the author of being himself, and "to feel its relation to him; then nature, in all its as- "pects around us, ought only to be felt, as *signs* of "his providence, and as conducting us, by the univer- "sal language of these *signs*, to the throne of the *de-* "*ity*." "And perhaps it is chiefly for this *fine* issue, "that the heart of man is thus *finely* touched, (or en- "dued with a *moral taste*,) that devotion may spring "from delight; and that all the noblest convictions, "and confidences of religion, may be acquired in the "simple school of nature."* "It calls forth the hymn

* This sentence seems to border on the extravagancies of Herbert, by unduly exalting the light of natural religion, to a par with that of revelation.

"of the infant bard, as well as the anthem of the poet "of classic times. And there is no era so barbarous "in which man has existed, in which the traces are "not to be seen, of the alliance which he has felt be- "tween earth and heaven; or, of the conviction he "has acquired, of the mind which created nature. "The rude altar of the savage, every where marks the "emotions that swelled in his bosom, when he erect- "ed it to the awful, or the beneficent deities, whose "imaginary presence it records."

"It is on this account, that it is of so much conse- "quence in the education of the young, to encourage "their instinctive *taste*, for the beauty and sublimity "of nature. While it opens to the years of infancy "or youth, a source of pure and permanent enjoy- "ment, it has consequences on the character and hap- "piness of future life, which they are unable to fore- "see. It is to provide them, amid all the agitations "and trials of society, with one gentle and unreproach- "ing friend,† whose voice is ever in alliance with "goodness and virtue, and which, when once under- "stood, is able, both to sooth misfortune, and to re- "claim from folly. It is to identify them with the "happiness of that nature to which they belong, to "give them an interest in every species of being which

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† As Christ above all others, is the "Gentle unreproaching friend, who reclaims from folly;" it is not *mere* nature, but the gospel, that best reveals this "supporter under misfortune." Alison on Taste, however flowery, entertaining, or instructive, seems to require a cautious and circumspect perusal.

"surrounds them; and amid the hours of curiosity "and delight, to awaken those *latent* feelings of be- "nevolence and of sympathy, from which, all the *mor-* "*al* or *intellectual* greatness of man finally arises. "(Intellectual and moral, are not synonymous, al- "though so used in this place.) It is to lay the found- "ation of an early and a manly piety; amid the mag- "nificent system of material *signs*, in which they re- "side. To give them the mighty key which can in- "terpret them, and to make them look upon the uni- "verse which they inhabit, not as the abode only of "human cares, or human joys, but as the *temple* of "the *living God*, in *which praise is due*, and where "*service* is to be *performed*." (Alison on Taste.)

NOTE II.

This note refers to Letter XVI, page 263.

On Campbell's translation of Matthew XXIV, 22.

THE present reading is, "Except those "days should be *shortened*, there should be no flesh "saved: but for the elect's sake, those days shall be "*shortened*."

The translation is, "For if the time were *protract-* "*ed*, no soul could survive; but for the sake of the "elect, the time shall be short."

Under the head of *remarks*, he offers the following reason, why he altered his version from the common translation, viz. "*To shorten* any thing, means al-"ways to make it shorter than it was; or, at least, to "make it shorter than was intended. Neither of "these meanings is applicable here."

This reason he endeavours to sustain by a critical reference to Matthew XXIII, 5. Its present reading is, "They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the border of their garments."

His translation of the same part of this verse, reads, "For they wear broader phylacteries than others, and "longer tufts on their mantles."

Not being qualified to reply to *this* criticism, I shall remark concisely on the primary one only; and on its appendant argument.

In respect to his substitution of "if the time were *protracted*," for "those days should be *shortened*;" and his adoption of "the time shall be *short*," in place of "those days shall be *shortened*;" I have to observe, that if the present version in common use, is, in this verse, incorrect, and incompatible with the true and genuine sense and meaning of this same verse, as originally written, whether in Greek or Hebrew, then it is truly unaccountable how so glaring and pernicious an errour, could have wholly escaped the discernment of two of the most learned and acute cotemporary criticks of the age; and that, whilst in the very act of commenting on this self same verse.

The former thus comments thereon, (but connects therewith Mark XIII, 20, it being of similar significa-

tion) viz. "And except that the Lord had *shortened* "those days, no flesh should be saved: none of the "inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, of whom he is "speaking, should escape destruction: So fierce and "so obstinate were the quarrels which, during the "siege, raged amongst the Jews, both within the walls "of Jerusalem, and abroad in the country, and the "whole land became a scene of desolation and blood-"shed: and had the siege continued much longer, "the whole nation had been destroyed, according to "what the Lord here declares! But for the elect's "sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath *shortened* the "days." (James Macknight, D. D. Author of a Harmony of the Gospels, and of a New Literal Translation from the original Greek, of all the Apostolical Epistles, &c. &c.)

The latter comments on the above named verse, thus. "Verse 22. *Except those days should be* "*shortened.* Josephus computes the number of those "who perished in the siege at *eleven hundred thou-*"*sand*, besides those who were slain in other places. "And if the Romans had gone on destroying in this "manner, the whole nation of the Jews would in a "short time have been entirely extirpated: but for "the sake of the elect, the Jews, that they might not "be *utterly* destroyed, and for the *Christians* particu-"larly, the *days were shortened.* These, partly "through the fury of zealots on one hand, and the "hatred of the Romans on the other; and partly "through the difficulty of subsisting in the moun-"tains, without houses or provisions, would, in all

"probability, have been all destroyed, either by the "sword or famine, if the *days had not been shortened.* "The besieged themselves helped *to shorten* those "days by their divisions and mutual slaughters; and "by fatally deserting their strong holds, where they "never could have been subdued, but by famine "alone; so well fortified was Jerusalem, and so well "provided to stand a siege, that the enemy *without*, "could not have prevailed, had it not been for the fac- "tions and seditions *within.* When *Titus* was view- "ing the fortifications after the taking of the city, he "could not help ascribing his success to God. "We "have fought," said he, "with God on our side; "and it is God who pulled the Jews out of these "strong holds, for what could *machines*, or the *hands* "*of men* avail against such towers as these." (Adam Clarke, LL. D. *Historiographer General* to the British Government; and Author of a Commentary and Critical Notes on the Bible.)

I am now to remark on Doctor Campbell's alleged *reason* for his departure in *this instance* from the present translation, and which as before stated, is this, viz. "*To shorten* any thing, means always to make it "shorter than it was; or, at least, to make it shorter "than was intended. Neither of these meanings is "applicable here." But why not applicable? Why not as consistent to *shorten* the miseries of the *predestinated* siege for the sake of the elect, as to avert the *predestinated* approach of the Roman army from *winter* and *from* the sabbath day, so as to accommodate the *flight* of the praying few, from the devoted city?

Instead of throwing the *veil* of "*broader* phylacteries and *longer* tufts" over *glaring* inconsistency, we will resort for the *illustration* of important truths, to scriptural parallels, indubitably authoritative.

In the message of the man of God to Eli, as recorded in 1 Samuel, II, 29, 30, we discover a divine decree altered, if not reversed, viz. "Wherefore kick "ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I "have commanded in my habitation; and honour thy "sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the "chiefest of all the offerings of Israel, my people. "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, *I said in-* "*deed*, that thy house, and the house of thy father, "*should walk before me forever. But now* the Lord "saith, *Be it far from me;* for them that *honour me*, "I *will honour*, and they that *despise me, shall* be "*lightly esteemed.*"

Herein, evidently, divine determinations are in *some respects changed.* For God had said unto Moses, "Take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his "sons with him, from among the children of Israel, "that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, "even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, *Eleazor* and *Itha-* "*mar*, Aaron's sons." "And the priest's office shall "be theirs, for a *perpetual statute.*" (Exodus XXVIII, 1, and XXIX, 9.)

"The priesthood, it seems, for some reason, not "mentioned in scripture, had been transfered from the "family of Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son, (Nadab and "Abihu, having been slain by the Lord,) to Ithamar "the younger son, from whom Eli was descended,

"but now is translated back again." (Orton.) See more fully in 1 Chronicles, xxiv, 1, 4.

From the whole therefore, of this train of events, comprehensive of divine determinations and providences, and of human conduct; the *fixedness*, and yet *latitude* of the divine counsels, is most conclusively inferable. The high priesthood, was *irrevocably* (during the Levitical institution,) *established* in the house of Aaron; but in respect to his son's and their posterity, it was *conditional*. Nadab and Abihu, by their misconduct, *lost* with their lives, all title thereunto. Eleazar's line of descendants for a season, were excluded, during which time, it devolved to the posterity of Ithamar. Eli and his son's in this line, having grievously abused their high trust, were cut off; and in the person of Abiather, the high priesthood departed forever from the house of Ithamar. This event took place in the days of Solomon, one hundred and twenty seven years after the death of Eli; at which period also, this high office reverted back to the house of Eleazor, in the person of Zadok, (as see 1 Kings, ii, 26.) In this instructive view of this interesting subject, we have portrayed before us, most striking evidence of divine sovereignty, and human freedom. An absolute irrevocable decree, evinces the former, a provisional and conditional decree, substantiates the latter. The Almighty reigns in the uncontrouled exercise of all his attributes; whilst man, *unnecessitated* exercises the unalienable prerogative of genuine freedom, viz. a self determining power over his own will.

But from the case of Eli, the readers attention is invited to Numbers XIV, 30—34. "Doubtless, ye "shall not come into the land, *concerning* which, *I* "*sware* to make you *dwell* therein, save Caleb, the "son of Jephunneh, and Joshua, the son of Nun. But "your little ones, whom ye said shall be a prey, them "will I bring in, and they shall know the land which "ye have despised. But as for you, your *carcasses* "they shall fall in the wilderness. And your children "shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear "your whoredoms, until your *carcasses* be wasted in "the wilderness. After the number of the days in "which ye searched the land, even forty days, (each "day for a year,) shall ye bear your iniquities, even "forty years, *and ye shall know my breach of prom-*"*ise.*" Had doctor Campbell, in seeking an illustration of his subject, but resorted, *not* to the enlargement of the Pharasees, phylacteries and tufts, *but*, to this *fall* of *carcasses*, through a judicial *breach* of *divine promise;* he then, instead of a *mere verbal* parallel of illustration, would have obtained a deeply interesting one of *doctrinal analogy;* but, as he wholly omitted both this, and the *no less* instructive dispensation to Eli and his house,* we will therefore, pay the greater attention to this *admonitory* narrative of Israel's rebellion, and overthrow in the wilderness.

In the foregoing passage, from the declaration of deity himself, we recognize distinct mention of an *oath*, and a *promise*, both made to Abraham, concerning his posterity, by God himself.

* See the Note, at the end of this Note.

The *oath* is thus mentioned by Abraham. "The "Lord God of heaven, who took me from my father's "house, and from the land of my kindred, and who "spake unto me, and that *sware* unto me saying, un- "to thy seed will I give this land." Genesis xxiv, 17.

The *promise* is thus expressed, and recorded in Genesis xv, 13—16. "Know of a surety, that "thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not "theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict "them, four hundred years: And also, that nation "whom they shall serve, will I judge: And after- "wards shall they come out with great substance; "and thou shalt go to thy father's in peace, thou shalt "be buried in a good old age. But in the *fourth* "*generation*, they shall come *hither* again; for the "iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." Here then it should *very* particularly be observed and noted, that the *oath* confering the possession of the land of Canaan, as an inheritance upon Abraham's seed, was truly and faithfully accomplished, because it was *so far* absolute and unconditional. But the promise made to the *fourth generation*, was that, which was *reversed* in God's *breach of promise*. The *fourth generation*, was the *fourth* born in Egypt, and consequently the eighth from Abraham; because those born to him, before the going down into Egypt, were in succession, that of Isaac, of Jacob, of Judah, and of Pharez.* The

* Doctor Adam Clarke, commenting on Genesis xlvi, observes thus, verse 12, "*The sons of Pharez, were Hezron and* "*Hamul.* It is not likely, that *Pharez* was more than *ten* years

descending line from Judah born in Egypt, was successively constituted by Hezron † and his brethren; Aram ‡ and his cotemporaries; Aminidab and his generation; and finally by Nashon § and those of his father's household. This last, was the designated *fourth generation*, as is evident from Numbers 1, 7. And betwixt them and the *fifth*, God himself drew the line of separation. All twenty years old and upwards, were to perish in the wilderness. But their children who were under twenty years, were to be put into the possession of that land, which their father's had despised. Some of the elder branches of the fifth generation, probably partook of their father's sins, and perished with them; but the younger, being under age, are adopted, to supplant their unbelieving and rebellious fathers.

But we are now to consider, wherefore the divine promise was broken, to this hapless *fourth generation*. Born slaves in Egypt, they seek the promised inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey; but they perish under manifold disasters in the wilderness. God in his own behalf declares the cause. "And the

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"of age, when he came into Egypt; and if so, he could not "have had children; therefore, it is *necessary* to consider *Hez-* "*ron* and *Hamul*, as being born during the seventeen years, "that Jacob sojourned in Egypt."

† Hezron, is both by Luke and Matthew, called Esrom, in the genealogies.

‡ Aram is called Ram, in 1 Chronicles II, 25.

§ Nahshan is is called Naasson, by Matthew and Luke, but in Numbers 1, 7, Nahshon.

"Lord said unto Moses, how long will this people "provoke me? And how long will it be ere they be- "lieve me, for all the *signs* which I have shewn "amongst them? I will smite them with the pesti- "lence, and *disinherit* them." (Numbers xiv, 11, 12. The Lord indeed, at the intercession of Moses, so far pardoned, as not immediately to destroy them. For "The Lord said, I have pardoned according to "thy word: But as truly as I live, all the earth shall "be filled with the glory of the Lord. (The glory "of his justice is meant.) Because of those men who "have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did "in Egypt, and in the wilderness, have tempted me "now these *ten* times, and have not hearkened to my "voice; surely they shall not see the land which I "sware unto their fathers, neither shall any of them "that provoked me see it." Verses 20—23. The last and greatest of these ten provocations, was the unbelieving rebellion, on hearing the evil report of the *ten* spies, who were immediately cut off. The other provocation, St. Paul thus enumerates and comments upon, viz. "But with many of them, God was not well "pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent "we should not lust after evil things, as they also "lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of "them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat "and drink, and rose up to play." "Neither let us "commit fornication, as some of them committed." "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmur- "ed, and were destroyed of the destroyer." 1 Corinthians, x, 5, 6, 7, 9.

This apostle, here enumerates indeed more fully, and remarks much more largely on these unhappy events; still urging them, as admonitions to all christians, of every succeeding age. And in his epistle to the Hebrews, he alludes most pointedly, to this fall of the *fourth generation*. In chapter III, 17, 18, 19, he thus speaks. "But with whom was he grieved "forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, "whose *carcasses* fell in the wilderness? And to "whom sware he, that they should not enter into his "rest, but to them that believed not? So we see, that "they could not enter in, because of unbelief." But St. Paul's inferences from this event, and his application of these inferences; I shall close in his own words, as expressed in Hebrews IV, 1; and for this purpose, shall make use, both of the common translation, and of the literal one, by Macknight.

The common translation. "Let us therefore fear, "lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, "any of you should *seem* to come short of it."

The literal translation. "*Wherefore*, let us *be* "*afraid*, lest a promise of entrance into his rest being "felt, any of you should *actually* fall short *of it*."

NOTE III.

This note refers to the note last preceding page.

SHOULD any reader (being disposed to cavil) object, that the *circumstances* of *Eli* and *his*

house, and of the *fourth generation*, are *each* irrevelant to the *case*, of the *days being shortened* for the *elect's sake;* because, that in this latter instance, whatever interposition of divine providence took place, it was of a *merciful* kind; whereas, the interposition in the two former events, was of a different nature, being *awfully corrective*, and consequently, that no such analogy existed, as would justify comparisons betwixt the former and latter dispensations of divine dealing. Such objection, will admit of this reply, viz. That the foregoing argument, being only, to maintain the conditionality, and consequent mutability of divine decrees, in some respects: Therefore, that it matters not in respect to the validity of the argument, how the decrees are changed, if only proved, to be at all changed; and this change, being undeniably proved, in the instances of *Eli*, and of the *fourth generation*, are consequently, evidences strongly corroborative of the present translation of Matthew xxiv, 22.

Should the objector be disposed *still* to continue his cavil against the supposed defect, in respect to analogy, he may in such predicament, be refered to the well known cases of Ahab and Ninevetes; in each of which, divine determinations were *altered*, at the suggestions of *mercy*. And should his reluctant mind, demand *still further* proofs, he may, by consulting Jeremiah xviii, 7, 8, 9, 10, obtain such further evidence, as shall obliterate the last remaining doubt; unless his *judgment is perverted* by *deep rooted prejudice*, and *unconquerable wilfulness*.

NOTE IV.

This note refers to Letter XVII, page 268.

Reprobation and Election, as taught in the ninth of Romans.

IN this controversy, the Epistle to the Romans, and more especially the ninth chapter, require *very* particular and special notice. In this place however, nothing more is admissible, than *merely* a few reflections and general observations, in respect to the Apostle's *leading purpose*, in writing this epistle; and a subjoining thereunto, a concise, but luminous exposition of this celebrated ninth chapter. As to the Apostle's *leading purpose* in thus writing, we may derive much information thereon, by duly attending to its date, in connection with a few of the most prominent features of its contents.

In the index, commonly annexed to our bibles, A. D. 60 is considered as the period of this epistle's being written. But "Pierson dates it at Corinth, in the year 57; others with Lardener, in the beginning of 58; and others, with Mill, in 58, without determining the time of the year." But these slight shades of difference are wholly immaterial. St. Paul suffered martyrdom unquestionably either in the year 66 or 67. And Jerusalem, beyond all doubt, was destroyed A. D. 70.

It therefore, was but ten or twelve years at the most, before this *expected* and terrifick catastrophe, that this epistle was written, and but a still shorter time, before the apostle's own death. As the desolation of the temple, the city and nation of the Jews had been so expressly foretold by Christ, and the time of it predicted to be, during the days of the generation, cotemporaneous with himself; it therefore, was impossible that the apprehension of it, should *not* deeply have impressed the *feeling heart*, and *soul*, and *mind*, of this holy apostle. It was this, in conjunction with other effects of the Jewish apostacy, that extorted from him the declaration, "I say the truth in Christ, I lie "not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the "Holy Ghost, that I have *great heaviness, and con-* "*tinual sorrow in my heart.* For I could wish that "myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, "my kinsmen, according to the flesh."

Under these impressions therefore, a *leading* object or purpose with St. Paul *was*, to endeavour, in this epistle to the christian church, in the great metropolis of the Roman empire, to enlarge on such *topics*, as would best tend to prepare, and instruct, both Jews and christians, for a profitable use of that approaching exhibition, of most righteous and awful retribution of divine providence, thus to be inflicted on the *impenitent murderers*, and *despisers* of the Son of God. And hence, the *reprobation* of the *Jews*, and *election* of Gentiles, constitute the most *prominent features* of the ninth, tenth, and the eleventh chapters of this epistle.

Other interesting subjects, are indeed discussed in different parts of this book; but still, the *election* of Gentile believers, and the *rejection*, and yet *final restoration* of Israel, are designedly, and most expressly declared and discussed. They are proved to be subjects of Old Testament prophecies; and are vindicated on the principles, both of retribute justice, and of divine sovereignty. But, that I may not unduly anticipate this apostle's reasonings on these subjects, I shall now, here subjoin, the following judicious exposition, of the ninth chapter, by the learned, and candid James Macknight, D. D.

COMMENTARY.

1. *I speak the truth in* the presence of *Christ, and do not lie, my conscience bearing me witness* in the presence of *the Holy Ghost*, when I assure you,

2. *That I have great grief and unceasing anguish in my heart*, because the Jews are to be cast off, the temple is to be destroyed, and the nation to be driven out of Canaan.

3. *For I myself could wish to be cut off from the church, instead of my brethren, my kinsmen by descent from Abraham:* and therefore in what I am going to write, I am not influenced by ill will towards my nation:

4. *They are the ancient people of God, theirs is the high title of God's sons, and the visible symbol of God's presence, and the* two *covenants, and the giving of the law*, which, though a political law, was dic-

tated by God himself, *and the* tabernacle *worship*, formed according to a pattern shewed to Moses, *and the promises* concerning the Christ.

5. *Theirs are the fathers*, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; persons eminent for piety, and high in favour with God: *and from them the Christ descended, according to his flesh, who is over all God blessed for ever. Amen.* The Jews therefore by their extraction and privileges, are a noble and highly favoured people.

6. *Now it is not possible that the promise of God hath fallen* to the ground; nor will it fall, though the Jews be cast off. *For all who are* descended *of Israel, these are not Israel;* they do not constitute the whole of the people of God.

7. *Neither, because persons are the seed of Abraham* according to the flesh, *are they all* the *children* to whom the promises belong; otherwise Ishmael would not have been excluded from the covenant, (Genesis xvii, 20, 21.) *But* God said, *In Isaac shall thy seed be called,*

8. *That is, the children* of Abraham *by natural descent, these are not* all *the children of God* and heirs of Canaan, of whom God spoke to Pharaoh: Exodus iv, 22. *But* only *the children* given to him *by the promise, are counted* to him *for seed.*

9. *Now, the word of promise was this: I will return to thee according to the time of life, and lo Sarah thy wife shall have a son.* Wherefore, Isaac is the only seed whom God acknowledged for his son and heir.

10. *And not only was there that limitation* of the seed to the promised son, *but* to prevent the Jews from thinking Ishmael was excluded on account of his character, *when Rebecca also had conceived twins, by the one son of Abraham, even* by *Isaac our father,*

11. And *these twins verily not being yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God* in making the one twin the root of his visible church rather than the other, *might stand by an election,* made, *not on account of works, but* from the mere pleasure *of him who called* Isaac the seed preferably to Ishmael. See verse 7.

12. *It was said to Rebecca,* "Two nations are in "thy womb, and two manner of people shall be sep- "arated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be "stronger than the other people, and *the elder shall* "*serve the younger.*"

13. This election proceeded from God's own pleasure, *as it is written,* Mal. 1, 2, 3. *I loved Jacob and hated Esau,* "and laid his mountain waste."

14. *What shall we say then,* concerning the election of Isaac preferably to Ishmael, and of Jacob preferably to Esau, to be the seed to whom the temporal promises were made? *Is not injustice with God? By no means.*

15. *For,* to shew that God may bestow his favours on whom he pleases, *he saith to Moses, I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.* In conferring favours on nations, and in pardoning those who deserve destruction, I act according to my own pleasure.

16. *So then, the election did not depend on Isaac, who willed* to bless Esau, *nor on Esau, who ran* for venison, that his father might eat and bless him; *but* it depended *on God, who may bestow his favours* as he pleaseth.

17. *Besides*, the punishment of nations is sometimes defered, to shew more conspicuously the divine justice and power in their after punishment; *for the scripture saith* to Pharaoh, *even for this same purpose I have raised thee* and thy people to great celebrity, and have upheld you during the former plagues, *that*, in punishing you, *I might shew my power, and that my name*, as the righteous Governour of the world, *might be published through all the earth.*

18. *Well, then*, from the election of Jacob, it appears, that *God bestows his favours on what nations he will; and* from the destruction of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, it appears, that *whom he will he hardeneth*, by enduring their wickedness with much long suffering, verse 22.

19. *But thou wilt reply to me*, since God is to cast off the Jews, *why doth* he *still find fault?* By destroying them, he might easily have put an end to their provocations. *For who hath resisted his will?*

20. *Nay, but, O man, who art thou that arguest to the dishonour of God? Is it reasonable for the thing formed*, who hath its being merely by the will and power of its maker, *to say to him who made it, why hast thou made me thus?*

21. To use the argument whereby God formerly illustrated his sovereignty in the disposal of nations,

Jeremiah XVIII, 6. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, to* make *of the same lump, one vessel* fitted *to an honourable use, and another to a meaner service?*

22. *Yet*, not to rest the matter on God's sovereignty, *if God, willing to shew his wrath* for the abuse of privileges bestowed, *and to make known his power* in the punishment of such wickedness, *hath upheld, with much long suffering, the* Jews, who, because they are to be destroyed, may be called *vessels of wrath fitted for destruction*, where is the fault?

23. *And* what fault is there, if God hath long preserved these vessels of wrath for this other purpose; *that he might make known the exceeding greatness of his goodness on the objects of his favour, whom*, by his dealings with the Jews, *he had before prepared for the honour of becoming his people?*

24. *Even us whom*, instead of the Jews, *he hath called* his church and people, *not only among the Jews, but also among the Centiles*, because we have believed the gospel.

25. This need not surprise the Jews: *It is agreeable to what God saith by Hosea*, "I will have mercy on her that had not obtained mercy," on the ten tribes whom I cast off for their idolatry: "and I will "say to them which were not my people, Thou art "my people;" I will call the Gentiles my people.

26. The calling of the Gentiles is foretold by Hosea still more plainly; *And it shall come to pass*, that *in the countries where it was said to the idolatrous Gentiles, Ye are not my people, there they shall be*

called the sons of the living God: the heirs of immortality, by believing the gospel. See Romans IX, 8, note.

27. *Besides*, the rejection of the Jews at this time is not more contrary to the promises, than the rejection of the ten tribes, who were carried into captivity by the Assyrians, a rejection almost total; for *Isaiah lamenteth concerning Israel*, that "though the num-"ber of the children of Israel," who are carried away "captives, "be as the sand of the sea, only a remnant "of them shall return."

28. *For* as the same prophet adds, verse 22. *Finishing and executing speedily this rejection, according to the righteous threatening of God, certainly the Lord will make their rejection a speedy work upon the land* of Israel.

29. *And as Isaiah hath said before*, chapter I, 9. *Unless the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant* of our nation, *we should have become as Sodom, and been made like to Gomorrah;* we should have been utterly destroyed as a nation.

30. *What then do we infer* from these prophesies? Why this: *That the Gentiles, who* being ignorant of the righteousness necessary to salvation, *did not pursue righteousness, have obtained righteousness* by embracing the gospel: not that righteousness which consists in a perfect obedience to law, *but a righteousness of faith.*

31. *But the Jews who endeavoured to obtain righteousness*, by obedience to the law, *have not obtained righteousness*, by obedience to law.

32. *For what reason* have they not obtained it? *Because not by* obedience to the law of *faith, but verily by obedience to the law of Moses they pursued it: for they stumbled at the stumbling-stone*, and fell: they refused to believe on a crucified Messiah, and were broken.

33. This happened *according to what was foretold, Behold I place in Sion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence. Yet whosoever believeth on* this crucified *Christ*, as a sure foundation of the temple of God, and rests his hope of righteousness on that foundation, *shall not make haste*, out of the presence either of men or of God, *as ashamed* of believing on him.

THE END.

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